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GRADUATE UNIVERSITY

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

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THE BAIRD LECTURE FOR 1924

BY

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TO

THE CONGREGATIONS AND PARISHES WHICH I HAVE SERVED DURING A LONG MINISTRY—SKELMORLIE: JEDBURGH: WEST PARISH OF ST. NICHOLAS, ABERDEEN: MORNINGSIDE: AND ST. CUTHBERT'S, EDINBURGH.

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PREFACE

THE following lecture claims no merit except that of contact with human life. It is indebted to many thinkers and teachers, but much more to the joys and sorrows which a passage through the world brings. The lecture is not academical. Yet it may not be the worse for addressing the universal heart. The "binding" of the book, uniform with a long series, is, perhaps, unattractive. May some readers let their minds pass beyond outward appearances, and linger for a little with the lecturer in sanctuaries of the soul that to him are very intimate and dear.

His friends the Very Rev. J. N. Ogilvie, D.D., and the Rev. Thomas Marjoribanks, B.D., have read the proofs carefully; they are of course responsible only for such typographical care, and not for any declaration of opinion. Mr. Marjoribanks has added to his friendly help the preparation of an Index.

R. H. FISHER.

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I

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Introduction.—So much has been written concerning "The New Psychology," as it is called, that any effort to contribute to that theme by one who is not a trained philosopher would be superfluous. This lecture makes no such attempt.

Psychology, or the science of the mind, covers a far wider range than this lecture seeks to explore. It occupies the field of child-psychology, animal-psychology, savage-psychology, and, indeed, it studies all states of consciousness or unconsciousness. Ours is a humbler task. We are to be concerned with the phenomena of Religious Experience as they are adumbrated in the Bible, illustrated in the lives of good men and women, and to some extent discovered by ourselves.

In such a task we are in accordance with the spirit of the age, which likes to deal with facts—with things as they are. Philosophical speculations are up in the air, and change with changing years. But in most regions of life experience is stable. As summer and winter, springtime and harvest come with a regularity which is only not thought wonderful because it is not noticed, so the joys and sorrows, the doubts, anxieties, and fears, and the high emotions and the low temptations of human kind are the same as when the patriarchs met them on the plains of Mamre.

A "theory of vision" was devised by Bishop Berkeley; but the charm of a summer landscape and the pathos of the setting sun abide. We are not sure of the ultimate constitution of matter; but, like Samuel Johnson, we hurt our foot when we hit it against a stone. The great laws of life we call morality are permanent; while theories of ethics rise and decay. A child can find his footing and adjust himself to the law of gravitation at the age of one year, and stagger along quite bravely; but that sublime generalisation about the attraction of particles of matter according to the square of the distance, which Newton discovered, taxes the intellect of the profoundest mathematician. So God is God and Christ is Christ to a poor widow in a garret; and plain people are too much assured of the facts which they know to trouble about the explanations that theologians give.

The truth is that most people are sceptical about much of the teaching that is called the New Psychology; and they are wholly certain that the most valuable parts of it are not new.

The subject has been pursued with the greatest intensity in America, and is associated there chiefly with the names of Starbuck and Coe and William James.

They followed practical methods of enquiry, and were specially devoted to what is called the "questionnaire," hundreds of people being set to answer queries regarding their mental and spiritual history. With all its appearance of induction and scientific experimentation, this method is delusive when it concerns the soul.

One cannot know personally all the men and women who are thus diagnosed; even a skilful medical consultant must often be at a loss with a new patient.

Moreover, it is a common experience that witnesses like to answer what they imagine they are wanted to answer. Also, all the patients under the psychologists' examination have not the gift of accurate speech, and such language as they use is often in entire discordance with their actual frame of mind. Others have no intellectual aptitude in adjusting themselves to questions regarding inner experiences of the soul. Then, again, phraseology that may be familiar to the investigator conveys almost no meaning to some minds being investigated.

For these reasons a certain measure of incredulity may well be cherished regarding the conclusions reached by Starbuck and his school.

The word "Psychology," so often on people's lips, and so often qualified by the adjective "New," has little claim to originality. The jargon about the "subconscious," which is its favourite speech, has been the talk of all generations of men. They have been accustomed to the phenomena of memory—the strangest, perhaps, of all our faculties. The fact that incidents of the past lie hidden in the mind for years, to be reproduced with more or less completeness, has been one of the wonders of mind for ages; and men and women who make no pretence to the use of technical terms like "subconsciousness" have been fully acquainted with the phenomena which such a term describes.

All men, for example, who think at all have some recollection of a difficult problem that puzzled them at night but seemed to have resolved itself in the morning. There is no better known illustration of this working of the subconscious than the record of Sir Walter Scott, who would discover the evolution of the plot of a romance while he was asleep. The whole matter of memory and the association of ideas has been dealt

with, practically and philosophically, before the New Psychologists were born. It was treated in much the same spirit as theirs by the illustrious Professor Bain of Aberdeen.

Their words "Repression" and "Sublimation" sound very learned; but are they any advance on St. Paul's instruction, "Overcome evil with good," or on our Lord's wonderful parable of the house that was left empty for the seven devils to return?

And as for "suggestion," whose value and significance no one need deny, there is a story in the Gospels about St. Peter and St. John that contains everything that Baudouin has to say about it. After the Resurrection St. John came to the empty Tomb in advance of St. Peter; but he lingered and did not enter, and it is recorded "then went in that other disciple," St. John following unconsciously the impulsive St. Peter's lead. There is a deeply thoughtful sermon on this subject entitled "Unconscious Influence," by that greatest of American preachers, Bushnell. That sermon contains everything that is vital in the "suggestion" theories of the New Psychology.

The grotesqueness of much of the explanations of mental facts by the "New Psychology" is really offensive. The system is obsessed by sex. If you do an evil act it is described as "sexual gratification"; if you do a good act it is accounted for by "sexual repression" or "sublimation." Freud, especially, believes that the sexual instinct is the underlying motive of all other desires and emotions. A boy's love for his mother arises mainly out of jealousy of his father; and even a baby on its mother's breast is experiencing the first sensations of sexual gratification. Fine words like "psychoanalysis" may be used about such insane maunderings;

but to most people they are merely abhorrent. According to such teachers, cruelty and pity arise from the same physical desire. Cruelty is the emotion expressed, the other is the emotion repressed, so that the more a man shows of pity the more of cruelty is in his subconscious mind. "There is no virtue in pity," writes a certain authority; "it is not a question of the will but purely of the emotions, and is nothing else than one of the components of erotic desire." The same writer goes on to say that indecency and modesty are practically the same impulse, the one expressed, the other repressed, so that (to quote his words) "there is no virtue in modesty." Pity is surely the least self-regarding of all virtues. And as for modesty being the same instinct as indecency, we turn in amazement from such a notion.

On the general principles of what is called the New Psychology there need be no disagreement, though their originality may be fairly disputed. Practically they are finding useful employment in reference to factory work and fatigue, and the management of men, and the use of advertisement, and education, and, under the inspiring direction of M. Coué, in the healing of disease. But who has not known, before such teaching became fashionable, about the healing power of a good physician, quite apart from his drugs, the soothing of nerves that his presence brings, and the "virtue" that goes out of him? Our Lord put His healing hand on a woman's brow and presently the fever left her. "Only believe and thou shalt be saved." "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report . . . think on these things." Is not the whole secret of "suggestion"

there ? And, as for spiritual power, are not the facts of life behind the words of one of the greatest of poets :

> When duty whispers low, "Thou must,"
> The youth replies, "I can" ?

It will be apparent that this lecture is not intended to follow the lines of New Psychology teaching, important and valuable in many respects as that teaching is.

Are all People Religious ? — The first effort should probably be to meet the problem that Religious Experience does not seem to be universal, and is in many people apparently non-existent. St. Paul is our guide in this confessedly difficult question.

In our self-esteem we are apt to fancy that what is occupying us must be of moment also to others. But St. Paul was more clear-sighted. Strange though it be that immortal creatures should be thinking more about food and drink and silly amusements than about the great things of life and destiny, St. Paul did not shut his eyes to the fact that it was so. And it did not make him angry or even broken-hearted, but only sad. "The natural man," he wrote to the Corinthians, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned." It was deplorable, but it was true.

Every age has had the same spectacle presented to it of the indifference of crowds of men and women to what are the only momentous things. Christian folk go to church to pray to God, to remember the ineffable grace of the Lord Jesus, to contemplate together the mystery which lies over life, and seek together the clues which are given regarding

the future. But, while they are doing this, in what are hundreds of their fellow-citizens engaged? They are reading the Sunday newspaper in bed. They are lounging by the fire, talking of yesterday's football or to-morrow's racing. The horizon of their thoughts is not more than ten years wide; its upreach is not more than six feet high. They live in the present and in the world of the senses. Church and religion and prayer are words of little meaning or power for their minds. What is to be said about them? Should the Church be angry or despairing? Or can Christians face the facts as St. Paul faced them—sadly and yet not hopelessly, calling those people no hard names, but only recognising that, like blind men or deaf men, they are to be pitied because they are missing experiences that mean so much to happier souls? St. Paul, with his wide charity, spoke of such people as being only babes in the lap of Nature, "natural men," with their higher instincts, their wider outlook, not yet developed. And what he mourned for he hoped to see mended by and by.

The lack of interest in spiritual things shown by so large a number of men and women—our fellow-countrymen, our fellow-citizens—would be simply appalling were it not that faith in their possibilities and good hope of their future are grounded on three solid foundations. 1st, There is nothing hidden, reserved, esoteric, in Christianity. 2nd, There is no man in whom the religious faculty is entirely wanting. 3rd, The Blessed Spirit is for ever working upon the souls of men as they are by nature, making them not natural but spiritual men.

Christianity is not a hidden esoteric scheme which only a few initiated men and women can understand.

The word "mystery" which the New Testament uses so often may have come from Pagan sources; but it has brought no Pagan content with it. Whenever the word "mystery" occurs in the New Testament it speaks of something that once was dark and hidden but now, by God's mercy, has been revealed. The great mystery in the New Testament is the Plan of Salvation which for long ages had been unknown to the world but now is clear in Christ:

> And so the Word had breath, and wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds
> In loveliness of perfect deeds
> More strong than all poetic thought;
> Which he may read who binds the sheaf,
> Or builds the house, or digs the grave.
> And those wild eyes that watch the wave
> In roarings round the coral reef.

Of course, there are issues of the faith which run up to the unknowable, and there are final explanations which it is hopeless for a limited intelligence ever to gain; but the great central truths of Christianity are fittingly described as "the simplicity that is towards Christ"; "the wayfaring men, though fools, cannot err therein." It is of the essence of Protestantism to maintain this openness of religious truth for the minds of all who will seek it. To keep the Bible away from the laity, to discourage free thought and enquiry concerning the foundations of Christianity, to put symbols and observances in place of spiritual fellowship and apprehension—all that is of the nature of Paganism, with whatever fine names of Catholic practice or ancient piety it may be adorned. There is nothing like the Greek mysteries in the religion of Christ.

Every scholar knows how influential a part the

Mysteries played in the life of the Greek people. The chief mysteries were those known as the "Eleusinian." For nine days in the autumn of each year, with every circumstance of pomp, and with that attraction of secrecy which has done so much for Freemasonry, the mystic ceremonies were performed: youths were initiated into the sacred rites: secret formulas were imparted to them: and they were allowed to see sacred objects which none but the initiated ever beheld.

That on the whole the Eleusinian mysteries were elevating and impressive seems to be certain from what is told by Plato. It may even be true that the initiated were taught of the unity of God and of the spiritual truths which lay behind the mythologies. But it can hardly be denied that it is an evil that the highest part of religion, its spiritual meaning, its mystical fellowship with the divine, should be reserved for a chosen few, while symbols and pictures and stories were good enough for the many. Christianity knows no such inner doctrine, no hidden, reserved, esoteric meanings kept only for the chosen few. St. Paul went from house to house declaring the whole counsel of God. And our Lord Himself bade His disciples declare on the housetops that which they had heard from Him in secret; so that the words of the poet Cowper are true, and we see

> What sages would have died to learn
> Now taught by cottage dames.

There is no need to detract one whit from the majesty of some truths that tax the noblest intellects, and must necessarily be greatest to the great, when one lays emphasis on this first affirmation — that

there is not one gospel for the learned, for Churchmen and theologians and trained minds, or men of privileged orders, and another for the mass of men.

A second foundation of the faith is equally sure, and it keeps us from despairing about the people we know who are entirely occupied with society and amusement. There is no man in whom the religious faculty is entirely wanting and who cannot be awakened to spiritual things. Of course, there are degrees in all human possibilities of acquirement. Some men are born with a bodily frame which for ever excludes the possibility that by any training they might become heroes of the boxing ring. In the same way most people have discovered that their intellectual parts are not such as could by any education become supreme ability, not to say genius.

All this which is true about body and mind must be admitted to be true about the realm of the spiritual. There are many degrees of attainment between a man of the world and the religious genius whom we call a Saint. A long ascent lies between the awakening soul and the heights where men like Thomas à Kempis or Francis of Assisi or Keble or Newman walked. But when this has been frankly admitted, and the notion of the equality of man is seen to be as hopeless a delusion in the spiritual sphere as in any other, it still remains true that, just as every man has a body as well as any athlete, and a mind as well as Shakespeare, so every man has a spiritual faculty however humble compared with God's illustrious saints. And to that spiritual faculty a progress really infinite is possible. No bounds can be set to what the Spirit of God can do even with the most unpromising material.

The everlasting proof of that is the Disciples. We

see the disciples of Jesus first as we might see any day a knot of rough-clad men loitering on the quays of a fishing village. What was to be expected of them? We see them afterwards fighting like children about the best seats at dinner tables and questioning which of them was the greatest man; what was to be expected of them still? We see them, at the close of the Gospels, fleeing like cowards from their Master's side, and the boldest denying Him with a white face and with a weak man's oaths upon his lips; what was to be expected of these men? Yet the Spirit of God came upon them with power. They wrote about the Master with a touching grace and intimacy of knowledge: they went forth—those fishermen—to convince an educated society that everybody was in darkness except themselves, upon whom the true light had shone. Magistrates and philosophers and even monarchs seemed unimportant people to those fishermen upon whom lay the commands of a Mightier than the mighty and a Wiser than the wise. Until the end of time it was made plain by those men that there is something in the heart of all mankind to which the Gospel of Christ can make its straight appeal.

The third sure ground of hope for the undeveloped religious experience is in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. It is said that Thomas Aquinas once had an interview with the Pope of his time and found His Holiness with a treasurer engaged in the act of reckoning his resources. "You see, Thomas," said the Pope, "that the Church lives no longer in an age when she can say, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" "True, Holy Father," answered the monk, "neither does she live in an age when she can say, 'Rise up and walk.'" That was a shrewd lesson. It is not by

material resources, not by organisation, not by the service of able men, but by the power of God's spirit working within her that the Church can triumph now as of old. We may say our pretty things about the Sermon on the Mount; but we cannot obey the Sermon on the Mount unless God gives us His Spirit to be our strength. It is He who makes us know the Father, and takes of the things of Christ and shows them to our souls as else we might never see them. "How do you know that the Bible is from God?" a saintly woman once was asked. "Because," she answered, "I have become acquainted with the Author." A deep Christian truth is there. The road to fuller spiritual experiences may be taken by all; but the Spirit must be the Guide.

"KNOW THYSELF."—

> Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
> These three alone lead life to sovereign power.

Every one remembers that great saying in Tennyson's "Œnone." Of the three virtues which he names self-knowledge is probably the rarest and the hardest to acquire. The moral nature has its mysterious depths which it is difficult to explore. Within it are faults, hidden even from our consciousness, yet probably more grave and dangerous than those which are patent to all.

Three causes at least explain their existence.

There is always a certain sophistry in evil. It gives fair names to foul things, and convinces itself complacently of its virtue even when its course is crooked. It is an elementary and "amateur" hypocrite who only succeeds in deceiving his neighbours. The accomplished hypocrite deceives himself. Within his heart he sets up a sort of ideal which he believes to

correspond with the reality of his character, and he worships at that shrine without a misgiving. No one is so blind as he to the truth about himself. Who has not known of a man who shielded his pride under the title of "a proper spirit of independence," or his greed under the cloak of "prudence"? A genuinely religious man may be grossly self-deceived as to the motives of his conduct. He harbours no suspicion that his zealous denunciation of some sins may partake of the same morbid pleasure that makes the sins be done. So pleased is he with his rectitude that he never suspects that it has a kinship with vanity. So insidious and mysterious is the working of evil in the nature that self-indulgence easily intrudes into liberality, and sensual pleasure into the ascetic's self-denial and mortification of the senses. Those who study our human nature the most closely are for ever tracing its divagations along dark and devious ways, and discovering that sophistry can blind the best to secret faults and make them believe that the faults are virtues of which to be proud.

Account must also be taken of the blinding power of fashion. We live amid a world of men and women from whom insensibly we catch a tone. Whatever does not offend against the manners of society passes unrecognised. A parallel may be found in that wonderful phenomenon of nature, protective colouring. An animal or a bird gains in its fur or feathers the colour of the vegetable growth with which it is surrounded. A brown grouse among the brown heather can hardly be recognised except by sharp eyes, so marvellously does the creature accommodate itself to its environment. Some such law makes our moral judgements assimilate to the ordinary ways of looking at things

which we find about us, and a man who would never think of sinning, as it were, in loud colours, in which he would differentiate from the respectable people he knows, insensibly falls into their worst offences because they are so common that they are unnoticed. It seems incredible to us now that Christian men should have followed the slave trade, and justified their conduct to themselves. It seems monstrous that Christian ministers should have found a warrant for that iniquity in the text of Scripture which says, "Cursed be Canaan." It seems as if we were dealing with inhuman wretches when we read of the tortures of the Inquisition, inflicted by men, often godly and kind-hearted, who thought that they were pleasing God, and saving souls, and obeying His own commandment, "Compel them to come in." Nearer our own day, one is startled by learning of the opposition of Mr. John Bright—a pious man and a Quaker mystic—to the reforms in factories which Lord Shaftesbury urged, and his defence of intolerable conditions of work and wages. The reason is altogether in the sway of the customary. In certain circumstances moral judgements had been formed, and every one around held the same opinions, and an iniquity was not seen to be an iniquity, for eyes were not opened.

Many a time the question is asked, "Are we Christians? Do we believe what we say we believe, and wish to follow the Master whose name we bear?" Such a suspicion may well arise. It is only the torpor of custom which hinders us from seeing and remedying much in the Church and in society that cries for reform. We do not even see the abuse; we do not even suspect that we are in the wrong.

The atrophied vision of habit contributes its share

to our self-ignorance. We sin away our sensitiveness. Conscience, once quick to notice evil, becomes like some fine instrument blunted by misuse. What a boy or girl startled at becomes familiar to a man or woman, and its ugly look disappears. Not, indeed, at once does habit grip the judgement and blind the eyes to evil. Its processes are slow, steady, sure. "No one was ever suddenly very base," said the Latin moralist. Habit creeps on the character with the silent, imperceptible step of advancing years. We neglect a duty till we forget that it ever was a duty; we do wrong things till we cease to suspect that they are wrong. A sin which long ago we should have known in all its iniquity, and should have hated to contemplate, has become customary and we never think of it at all.

Every earnest man should learn to suspect himself of secret faults because he sees so clearly the secret faults of others. "How can that man be so blind," he asks, "to what everybody else in the world sees? The man thinks himself kind and generous; he is a skinflint. The man thinks himself humble; he is intolerably vain. How can he be so blind?" If one speaks like that, it is surely needful to reflect: There may be something in myself unnoticed by me that is patent enough to disinterested observers; faults secret so far as I am concerned, but crying aloud to wife and children and acquaintances. A little such candour would help a man wonderfully to the knowledge of himself. It is strangely educative to look at a good portrait of one's self. One could hardly believe that that was one's expression. It is still more difficult to recognise one's own voice if one speaks into a phonograph and hears it repeated. If we could teach ourselves to form the judgement upon our own

character which others must inevitably form, it would correct many a foolish complacency.

It is necessary also to set ourselves beside the standard. Much introspection is merely morbid, hysterical, unprofitable. But it is well at times to compare ourselves with the standard and ask how it is with our souls. There are two standards. One is the Law of God. If we take the Ten Commandments, and one by one interpret them as rules of motive and desire as well as of conduct, they will make many hidden things become clear.

The loftiest standard is the life of Christ. It is curious to watch people copying great pictures in a gallery, and to wonder how they dared to set up their mechanical and lifeless figures, evacuated of a soul, beside a masterpiece on the gallery walls. The dullest sees what the difference is.

> O the little more and how much it is,
> O the little less and what worlds away.

It is some such presumption, with a result as disheartening, with which we venture to set ourselves beside the Pattern. Yet the discipline is wholesome. All the foolish complacencies vanish. The secret of the soul leaps out to light. Christ's presence is as revealing a power to-day as when to the amazed disciples He first made them see the Father—and themselves.

The searching sunshine of God is the light in which the whole truth of our being is seen. The atmosphere of a church seems pure enough at ordinary times; one's eye can detect nothing that floats in the air. But if a bright gleam of sunshine pierce across the church we discover in it a million motes and specks of

dust in the unsuspected air. At ordinary times it is so with our souls. There are faults by the myriad crowding through them ; but we do not even dream of their existence. Then we turn to pray ; or we seek the Lord's Table in Communion : our souls are deeply stirred with a consciousness of His presence ; a flood of His pure sunshine deluges them, and we know ourselves. Thank God, it is not only evil that we see. It was not to seek for dust but for the lost piece of silver that the householder lighted the lamp ; hidden virtues are found in us under the sunshine of God's presence as well as hidden sins. We thank God for that. But we know how many and how grave are hitherto unsuspected qualities of evil, and we learn a deep distrust of ourselves, and a humble faith in God. The more we learn of our unconscious and subconscious selves the plainer becomes the duty and the privilege of prayer. We know that God can help us when we are too ignorant to help ourselves. We know that He forgives the sins which we hardly knew we had committed. In the 15th chapter of the Book of Numbers, at the 22nd verse, there is a passage, deeply moving in spite of its merely ceremonial appearance, concerning the mercy of God towards the failings of dull-minded blind creatures who miss, by very ignorance, the best things of life. And the most central and the tenderest meaning, also, of Holy Baptism is that God holds us in His arms when we are too blind to see Him, too frail to grasp His hand.

The Varieties of Religious Experience

Nothing is more remarkable than to read the varied metaphors by which the Holy Spirit is described in

Holy Scripture and in devotional literature. He is described as Light, as Fire, as the Dew, as the Dove, as the Wind. How diverse from one another are these figures! And how diverse even the working of any one of them! We speak of Him as the Wind: but the gentle breeze that fans our cheek with its caress in the morning may rise ere night into the tempest that upturns the ocean and sweeps the forests before its blast. We speak of Him as the Fire: but it is one thing to feel the cheery glow from the hearth, diffusing its warmth and comfort through the room, another to watch the flames leaping with devilish destructiveness through some congested dwelling of the poor, to hear the crash of falling beams and the shrieks of the injured, and to think of the desolation and the sorrow the fire-monster has caused.

To any one who reflects a little on the diverse operations of those agents of nature which Scripture has given as the analogue of the Spirit, there need be little wonder that the gifts of the Spirit are diverse also.

Yet this is a conclusion to which many refuse to come. Uniformity is the perfection of small geniuses: and they will see nothing good which does not measure with their rule and line. Sudden conversion, to one type of churchman, is a notion he cannot tolerate; while his brother will have no man a Christian at all who cannot give the day and hour at which his higher life began. The piety which cannot declare itself at the street corner is suspected by many: while many more suppose that only a heathen formalism can find its home where the incense rises, the altar lights burn fair, and the gorgeous banners pass in stately procession through the aisles. "Diversity of gifts

but the same spirit" is a hidden mystery to such as they. "Twain are they sundered": so wrote a Scottish poet about two men thus diverse in the virtues which they shared :—

Twain are they sundered each from each
Though oft together they are brought,
Discoursing in a common speech
Yet having scarce a common thought.
The same sun warmed them all their days;
They breathe one air of life serene;
Yet moving in their several ways
They walk with a whole world between.

I think they never meet without
Some sharp encounter of their wits;
And neither hints a faith or doubt
The other does not take to bits.
For what the one regards with awe
The other holds a creed outworn;
And what this boasts as perfect law
That turns to laughter with his scorn.

Thus on their several ways they go,
And neither other comprehends;
Yet it was God who made them so,
And they do serve His several ends.
That seeks for light to walk in it,
And this for God to live in Him;
One questions with a searching wit,
The other trusts where all is dim.

The verses illustrate the diverse working of the Spirit of God of which all Scripture and all experience tell. We must not think that such a story as that of Elijah at Carmel proves that the Spirit confines Himself to one manifestation of His work. We must not believe, as is sometimes maintained, that God is not in the whirlwind, and not in the fire, but only in the

"still small voice." It was so, indeed, to Elijah. But God came in the Whirlwind to Job. He came in the Fire to Moses. And various as are the manifestations of His power in nature—manifold as is His beauty that opens before glad eyes in spring days, showing hundreds of varieties in daffodils alone—so diverse is His working by grace in human hearts, and so many the signs of His presence and power.

There is cause for thankfulness that the gifts of the Spirit are diverse, and that God sends not to all His servants a type of piety the same.

It shows, for one thing, that He deals with us as individuals and not in the mass: treating us not as inmates of an institution with cast-iron rules, but each as a separate soul. How vastly greater does His love appear when even the differences of His gifts can make us say, "Thou God seest me."

If the diversity of gifts have this benefit for each, how clear it is that it is well for all that God fulfils Himself in many ways "lest one good purpose should corrupt the world." What better men, for example, lived in Great Britain in the nineteenth century than Lord Shaftesbury and General Gordon? But would any one say that Great Britain would have been a better place to live in if all churchmen had been like Shaftesbury and Gordon? Or, patriotic as one may be, and fond of one's own church, does one really believe that the whole world would be better if it were conformed to the type of Anglican or of Scottish piety? Can we not see that it is good for all that each should live his life according to the nature God has given him: and have we not found a hundred times the refreshment of meeting minds or reading books which take intellectual standpoints different from our own and

are formed on a type of religion unfamiliar but not less real? Why is it that we, accustomed to the sober sanctities of Scottish devotion, find attraction so strong, now in the excitement of an evangelical revival, now in the sensuous accompaniments of a ritualistic worship? We feel that the Spirit is realising Himself there in ways so diverse yet in a measure equally profound; and we greet Him with the surprised emotion—the affection startled into a sense of its pathos—with which we meet and clasp hands with a dear friend in a foreign land. We learn more of him in the new surroundings than ever we had known before.

Thus are we bound to admit the two contentions which have been urged—the diversity of the Spirit's gifts, and the advantage to men that the gifts are so diverse.

Yet there must rise above all the varieties of religious experience some feature that is typical. Diverse though the gifts of the Spirit be, there must be something that we recognise as one—something august, beautiful, which is the essence of all religion, the meeting point of all faithful souls. It is Spirituality. That loftiness of soul, that fellowship of the spirit with the Highest which we cannot define but which we behold in the good; that serene converse of their nature with all that is holy, sweet, and fair, which adds something of awe and something of winsomeness to them and makes us feel that they live in an atmosphere above us, rare and divine; that which we cannot speak of in words of explanation, but which we call "Spirituality"—it is in it that the holy ones meet; in it their souls find fellowship; and, sundered though they be in diversity of gifts, in that same Spirit they are at one.

Turn where we will, we find proofs that the essence of religion is in this quality, and, wherever they are, true souls show it plainly.

What but the fellowship of the same Spirit can account, for example, for the devotional books we read ? There are two such books, besides the Bible, to which the suffrages of the world would be given. They are *The Imitation of Christ* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The one came forth from a monastery cell, the work of a monk of the old Roman days: a monk who held superstitions to which we would think ourselves loftily superior, and who owned a spiritual subjection which we would think the crouching of a slave. But from a man so different, from surroundings that we can barely realise, his book came forth to be the friend and the guide and the gentle comforter of pious souls in every branch of the Church of Christ—a book so spiritual that in it the whole world seems forgotten and ignored, and God and the soul speak together as a man with his friend. Suffering goes to the *Imitation* and breathes its air of peace. Doubt enters its presence as sometime we have gone into the dim sanctities of a church at eventide when the organ was sobbing low. Over all was an air of calm. Questioning seemed somehow irrelevant and irritating. The reverences fell upon our spirit, and doubt passed into the worship of the great Unseen and Unknown. Such a church, dim-lit perhaps, but unspeakably solemn, has *The Imitation of Christ* been for spiritual souls.

And that other book, *The Pilgrim's Progress*—a Puritan tinker wrote it: a man who had passed through experiences of the world rough and exciting, and had been quickened by a " Revival " exciting also

and little more refined. But what a home Bunyan's book also is for spiritual souls. The polemics of Puritan theology may be in it, if one is controversial enough to look for them. But, as we read it, most of us can only see the great heart sanctities of faith. Christian's burden lies heavy on us all; the "Hill Difficulty" is desperately steep; and the "Delectable Mountains" are exquisitely fair. A diverse gift, indeed, from that of à Kempis was the genius that wrote of Christian's journey, but the spirit was the same. It is a pity that Presbyterianism writes so few of such books of devotion.

Perhaps there is no proof of the unity of the most diversely gifted men in the bonds of spirituality that oftener touches mind and heart than the hymns of praise we sing. What is a hymn, more than a work of poetry? It is poetry, and poetry inspired by spirituality. Without spirituality there is no hymn; with it, the most diverse gifts are joined in praise. Broken up into fragments is the Church of Christ—so diversely gifted her sons that they cannot exercise their gifts in one organisation — but in the voice of their spiritual nature there is no dialect: they sing to God in the common tongue. There is no more delightful task than to find the diverse sources from which great hymns of praise have come. Among modern hymns, none is nobler than "Lead, kindly Light": it was written by the Roman Cardinal Newman. There are few sweeter or more beautiful hymns than "I heard the voice of Jesus say": it was written by the greatly revered Horatius Bonar of the old Free Church of Scotland. The High Calvinist, Toplady, wrote "Rock of Ages"; the Arminian and Seceder, Wesley, wrote "Jesus, Lover

of my Soul." The keen Evangelical Newton wrote "Approach, my soul, the mercy-seat," which some people love as well as any. And we sing them all: we, whose doctrinal position and whose traditional worship are different from the doctrine or worship which most of those writers approved or knew. We sing their hymns, and thank God for them. In their spirituality they meet together in our praise, and we meet with them.

The practical outcome of spirituality is the same. Diverse though the gifts of the Spirit be, they show their unity in one thing: they all bear their fruit in loving service to mankind. Spirituality is the distinction between mere philanthropy and religion, between the man who works for man and the man who works for the ideal. There is a story of the great Cardinal Newman, priest of the Roman Church, and Frederic Harrison, agnostic and positivist and enemy of the Christian faith. They met at the same house at dinner and fell into earnest talk. Their subject was the work of philanthropy in the crowded sorrowful East End of London. And, as they talked in keen agreement, the enthusiasm of each of them grew. Until at the last Newman said to his friend, "Unless I had known otherwise, I should have supposed that you had been a clergyman." Diverse the gifts, but may we not say—remembering the words of our Master about those who did good deeds to His poor—the spirit was the same? In the spirit of love they found their meeting-point: for he that loveth is born of God. Who are we that should banish from the company of the spiritual those who, like the blessed Master, are giving their lives for men? What do we think is the bond of union that keeps men within the fold? Will we stand by a man who is

unscrupulous at his business and a petty nagging tyrant in his home, merely because he says he is converted and can quote half the Bible by heart? Shall we banish the woman who makes the care of her home and her children the solemn burden of her life, whose serene and gentle nature for ever soothes and alleviates the troubles of others, and makes her house the abode of all the charities? Shall we call her not a good woman, not a child of God, because her face is not familiar in the select companies of the earthly saints? If that is the test we judge by, it is not the standard of the word of God. When we meet such lives of silent goodness we know them to be divine, by whatever names they are called.

> Sometimes they are
> The holy sisters who with wakeful eyes
> Watch by the sick in dreary hospitals
> Close to the battlefield. Sometimes we see
> The face gleam out beneath a Quaker hood
> With exquisite eyes of silent blessedness.
> Then all our spirit rises up in praise
> Because God's world holds in its wrecked design
> His image still who made it very good.

II

HINDRANCES

Two elementary considerations shadow over every thought of Religious Experience. One is the burden of hereditary influence that we bear, the other is the alliance of the soul with the body.

HEREDITY.—It is sometimes only after death that a likeness to one of the same family, which must have been there always, becomes singularly noticeable. It is this fact to which Tennyson refers in well-known lines of *In Memoriam* :—

> As sometimes in a dead man's face,
> To those that watch it more and more,
> A likeness, hardly seen before,
> Comes out to some one of his race.

Those who have seen a collection of authentic family portraits have noticed how one feature seems to persist through them all, and a subtle suggestion of kindred is behind even the most dissimilar features. Now and then, after the lapse of a hundred years, two faces are found, a great-grandfather's and a great-grandson's, that almost are identical—the lines, the expression, the character of each hardly varying from the other. All such experiences, and none are more familiar, constantly bring into our minds the mysterious relation of heredity in which the race is bound together.

The scientific investigation of these facts is not of very ancient date; but in the past half-century it has been adequately pursued. Heredity and variation have been recognised as the two conflicting forces between which the generations of men have balanced. It would be too much to say that on every important point the men of science have come to an agreement. For the whole question of the transmission of acquired characteristics, the handing down to offspring of physical or mental features which were new in the parent, is still in dispute. Yet no one doubts that, on the whole, the mistakes and failures, and also the progress, of the race are perpetuated from father to son, and that we are the heirs of the ages, not only in outside possessions of civilisation and literature and freedom, but also in the character and complexion of our spirits. As Mr. Sorley said in his *Ethics of Naturalism*: "Man has been produced by, and has become part of, his fellows. He is organically related to all the members of the race, not only bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, but mind of their mind."

All that heredity means as a teacher of the solidarity of mankind, all that it has to teach of the mysterious nexus that binds the generations together, may be taken to be one of the most striking and most certain of the scientific generalisations of our time.

Yet the doctrine of Heredity is not really modern. It is difficult to say what the Church's belief in "Original Sin" means if it be not a statement of the same truth. Nowhere is it asserted more plainly and boldly than in that law of the "Ten Commandments," where it is declared that God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third

and fourth generation. If one is asked for the most conspicuous and memorable statement in all literature of the solidarity of the race (that idea which is sometimes dated from the time of Auguste Comte), one will find it in the words of Holy Scripture, "As in Adam all died." Not once or twice, but many times (perhaps the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body is the most remarkable instance) modern science and thought have proved not the enemy but the upholder and rehabilitator of old Scriptural truths which many had come to believe outworn.

This has been notably so with the doctrine of Heredity. That the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge was so familiar a truth to the people who had fed their minds upon the Old Testament that it had graduated into the ranks of a proverb. It had been so fully and unreservedly accepted that a real danger had sprung up that its truth should be exaggerated, and the other side of the matter not adequately recognised.

Before this truth that every convolution of the grey matter of the brain hides within it the history of the past—a truth established by common experience and by science and heralded by Scripture—all men and women must stand, looking for its meaning for their own life and, above all, for its relation to their own moral responsibilities. What is to be said to the man who speaks like this: "My father was a drunkard; my grandfather was a drunkard; the craving for drink was in my mother's family too; a brother has already become a victim, there is no use in my striving against my fate. It is inevitable for me also"? What is to be said to the man who pleads, like the Scottish poet Burns:

If I have wandered in those paths
Of life I ought to shun;
As something, loudly, in my breast,
Remonstrates I have done;
Thou knowest that Thou hast formed me,
With passions wild and strong;
And listening to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.

Is all personal responsibility to be removed from the man who can show that he has been endowed with a nature to which certain sins are peculiarly alluring, and that he has not had a fair chance in the race of life, being so heavily handicapped before he began?

Unless our holy religion has some answer to this question, it will fail to meet one of the most pressing questions of human concern. But the Bible has most fully met the question. In the Old Testament and the New, an answer has been given. Both of the answers are good, though that of the New Testament is the more inspiring.

We take the Old Testament answer first; and find it in words of Ezekiel: "All souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Besides its relation of kinship to all the race of man, each spirit has its direct personal relationship with God. The one truth must be upheld to correct the exaggeration of the other. One by one, and not two by two, men and women must stand before their Judge.

It is perfectly true that they do not start fair in life. The old notion of each man's soul being at the beginning like a sheet of white paper is utterly exploded. The sheet has been scribbled over by many generations. But there is nothing in that to make evil-doing irresistible and inevitable. Oliver Wendell

Holmes told about a sick man that, when he was bidden to send for the doctor, he said, "It is too late to send for the doctor now, a hundred years too late." Yet there is no ground for such fatalism even in regard to merely physical illness. The teaching of science seems to be that heredity does not fix the disease but only causes a predisposition to it; prepares a suitable soil for it to grow in. It is so, for example, with consumption. There seems little doubt that those who belong to a consumptive family are more liable than others to be attacked by that cruel disease. But it will not come to them unless the seeds of it are sown in their own life. Who has not known of men and women in whose family this tendency has been who yet, by constant care, by treating seriously what stronger people might treat lightly, have kept themselves in health up to a good old age? The same truth applies to the moral life. Heredity fixes trial and not fate. Every one must be tried some way. To some the temptation is to drunkenness, to others to covetousness, to others to violent temper—and so forth. Heredity fixes what our special trial will be. It by no means fixes what will be the issue of it. If we know our hereditary tendency, it is for us sedulously to train ourselves to its resistance. And often (as in the case of St. Paul, where a thorn in the flesh was the instrument of his discipline) the saints of God have found that, so far from yielding to their besetting sin, they have won their crowns just by the noble overcoming of that evil. Instead of a bad heredity being necessarily the prophecy of a bad life, it may only indicate the lines of a noble and pathetic struggle out of which the man who began the worst will come out the best, the last being first, and the character made strong and stable and enduring

just in those qualities where by nature it was in defect.

A realisation of personal responsibility in the eyes of God, a consciousness of individuality and free will, is the power which the Old Testament brings to redress the balance of inheritance and bring cheer to an otherwise disheartened life. Not once or twice, but many thousand times such a triumph over nature has been won. "Do not whine and moan about your hereditary tendencies," the great-spirited Word of God would say: "know your own manhood, feel that you stand on your own feet: and play your manly part, with God above to favour and to reward."

The New Testament message in regard to Heredity is even more inspiring. In its very first page it brought two cheering messages concerning this anxious theme. It showed how evil heredity might be fought, and it revealed also an older and better heredity for our race.

The first teaching will always be the greatest help to any man—to be shown that a thing has been done, and not only that it may be done. What is the meaning of the two genealogies of our blessed Saviour which St. Matthew and St. Luke have given—genealogies which no one can quite make clear in their details—except to show that Jesus is linked close to the race, to the evil and good men and women whose nature it pleased Him to take upon Himself? "Inasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part in the same." Never must we forget His personal sinlessness. But the marvel of it is all the greater when we remember that, according to the flesh, He came of men and women as bad, some of them, as may be. Judah, David, Rahab, and

such as they, were in the direct line of the descent from which the Saviour sprang. If from a race so marred by dark blots of human passion, if out of a heredity in some respects so shameful and in every way so imperfect and frail, the pure flower of the life of Jesus sprang, what man or woman should be cast down at the memory of burdens which cannot be greater or a life trial which cannot be so severe? That the Son of David should have been holy and harmless and undefiled and separate from sinners is an everlasting encouragement to every soul that dreads the inheritance of the past.

The New Testament has done yet more for us than this. It has reminded us of what we are apt sometimes to forget—the help to life that comes from a good heredity. It has shown this in the noblest way. Since the tendency of mankind is upward, the result of hereditary influences should on the whole be on the side of righteousness. But the Lord Jesus has brought to us a far more inspiring thought than this. He has reminded us that, not only are we the sons of men, we are the sons of God. We came from Him at the first, made in His image, after His likeness, and, though we bear the image of the earthly, the imprint of the heavenly is on us too. There is no better recognised law of the natural world than what is called "reversion to type." When birds or animals, which have been by careful selection developed along a certain line, are allowed to go back to freedom and nature, in a generation or two they return to the original stock from which they sprang. With the differences that the moral life must imply, this is true also of the soul of man. Born of God at the first—His child yet, however far down the ages his race may go from its primal birth—there

is in man the longing for his Father's life, a yearning for the divine from which he sprang. It is not only the blood of creatures like himself that runs in his veins; the life of God is also his; the Father-Spirit abides in His children; the divine Heredity is strong in him even as the ties which bind him to his race. Give a man this noble thought; tell him of his origin and his destiny; say to him, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, then we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is"—then we have set a power against the powers of earth—then we have lifted the weight of a human inheritance that discourages and degrades; we have revealed an origin and a future to quicken heart and hope. Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure.

The Body.—A bigger hindrance to the religious life than any other is the association of the soul with a body. There is a well-known story regarding the death-bed of Archbishop Whately. His chaplain read for his comfort the words of Scripture, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." "Read it in the original," said the dying man. In the original it is "the body of our humiliation." "Yes," said the Archbishop, "that is what St. Paul meant. Nothing that God has made is vile."

The story emphasises the truth about St. Paul's teaching. He combated fiercely the notion that the body is essentially "vile." The budding heresy of Gnosticism was what St. Paul in the first epistle to St. Timothy described as "science falsely so called."

When his epistles were written the heresy was already blossoming, though it was only to come to its full luxuriance in a later century. A central teaching of Gnosticism was that matter is an evil thing and that the body is vile. The heresy had dangerous results both upon morals and upon theology.

Its result upon morals was twofold. Men either believed that the body was so irretrievably bad that it did not matter what they did with it, and this was an excuse for the grossest self-indulgence : or else they starved and macerated and tortured the body, and fell into the opposite extreme of a hard and self-absorbed asceticism.

The result of a doctrine that the body is vile was equally serious in the realm of theology. Believing that God could not have been the Maker of anything so evil, the Gnostics removed Him away from actual contact with the world, and set between Him and the world a series of aeons or emanations. St. Paul called this a " doctrine of angels." The lowest of them was the Demiurge, in contact with the world and the Creator of material things. Thus the face of the Father was obscured in the mists of an unknown distance. Christ also, some of the Gnostics taught, could not have inhabited a frame of flesh and blood, could not have been in contact with anything so vile : and the body that He wore was only a shade, a phantom, a wraith : and thus by their Docetism the Gnostics robbed us of a human Lord.

Such a doctrine of the vileness of the body St. Paul opposed with all the vigour of his commanding intellect. There is something sardonic in the fact that the translators of the Authorised Version should have charged St. Paul with the statement that the body is vile.

Yet St. Paul did recognise that the body was a poor lodging-house for an immortal spirit, and that it needed to be redeemed. He would not call the body "vile"; but he owned that it was often humiliating—"the body of our humiliation." Ever and again St. Paul recurs to the thought that it is hard to reconcile the body with a lofty view of life. The body responds inadequately to a spiritual stimulus: it hampers and thwarts its partner, the soul. When the loftiest in us would seek its satisfaction, the lowliest in us is refractory. Even St. Paul himself had to groan over the problem. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" It was manifest to him that, unless the body was redeemed as well as the soul, we should never reach the full mastery of life.

The whole subject does not bear discussion in its details, and some parts of it hardly bear thinking about. But every Christian feels at times that there is something humbling and distressing in the bodily life.

There is, for example, a peculiar grotesqueness in the relation of genius to physiology. We are tempted to laugh at our poor human nature when we think of a poet with a cold in his head, or a dyspeptic philosopher. The halo grows dim round certain noble brows when we think of the eminent men at their dinner-tables and recall the frailty of their frame.

Even the work to which these great souls needed to apply themselves in order to get food for their bodies seems sometimes a curious commentary upon their spiritual genius and their eternal destiny. Burns as a gauger in Dumfries was a strange enough spectacle. But is it not nearly allied to tragedy that any immortal spirit should be required to keep a shop, or be a clerk

in an office, or plough a field ? One sometimes reads of an artistic lad who wants to be a poet or a painter, and will not take his father's counsel to go into trade. And it is impossible to refuse a certain sympathy with the artistic creature, even while one remembers that he has a healthy appetite which either he or his father will need to supply. Such incongruities between the heir of eternity and his bodily dwelling-place present themselves often enough to reflection.

The body also (with all its wonderfulness) serves the mind so inefficiently that a captious mortal often grumbles at it. To how much of the external world we are deaf and blind : how inadequate are our senses to receive and chronicle the impressions which are sent to them ! A dog puts us to shame by its acute sense of smell. The commonest bird sees better than we. And our ears are far less sensitive than a rabbit's.

Then, when it comes to expression, how feeble an instrument is our tongue, how paltry the range of human speech. Even when it is eked out by the flash of the eye, the glow of the countenance, the gesture of the hands, how little of the thoughts that burn below can find an utterance. That great teacher, Thomas Aquinas, conceived of a human frame " so clear and transparent that the soul might sally out at every part, and sparkle out through the body as wine through a glass." But it is the experience of every one that, even when we wish to express a feeling so common as gratitude, our words fail us, and we convey but a slender notion of our real intention—even if we are not altogether misunderstood.

So could one go on to write of the " body of our humiliation "—the restraints it puts upon the higher

emotions, the impulses and temptations to evil it presents, its clogging weight of past propensities when the soul has long since repented and been forgiven.

But the final horror and humiliation which the body brings is its disease, its decay, its death. A line of Mr. W. E. Henley has haunted some people. He described the patients in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, where he himself lay, and as he told of one patient, bleeding and bandaged after his operation, he broke out in a scornful cry :

Alas for God's image !

Some such thought of our poor humanity, as we see it associated with the squalor of sickness and the corruption of death, must have distressed every one at some time. The imagination can hardly bear such thoughts for long. Here is the secret of the growth of cremation—that cleanly and healthy method of the disposal of the dead which is associated with the time when Christian faith was at its purest, and the martyrs gave their bodies to be burned. The thought of the rapid consumption of the body by fire is less harrowing to the imagination than the appalling picture, sometimes inevitably with us, which the grave conveys.

What, then, are the saving truths which bring light upon this difficult and anxious theme ?

First, of course, and always is the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christian men and women do not realise in detail all that the relation of the mind of Christ to a human frame implies. It is not necessary, nor is it desirable, that they should realise that. But here was the fact that the Highest touched the lowliest, and was not soiled thereby. A human brain was behind the forehead of Jesus, and a human heart

was beating within His breast, and—quite apart from the dogmas which we passionately believe—it is the common consent of the mass of mankind that in Him the ideal suffered no injury from contact with the actual, and the body became the pure medium for truth and purity to look through. In Him was seen in its highest that phenomenon of which the shining face of Moses, and the transfigured look of St. Stephen, were the sublime illustration—the body so moulded by the spirit that its very lineaments were a language, and every feature was an utterance of the holiness within. This power of mentality over matter is one to which the Church has given insufficient attention in her dull readiness to believe that the age of miracles is past. She has needed to be awakened to it by the vagaries of half-crazed heretics. Yet it is one of her most precious truths. The Incarnation has within itself the message that the body is susceptible of spiritual impulses, and is itself the discoverer of spiritual truths which otherwise could not have been ours. Our vile body, indeed! Without it we should not have known what fatherhood and motherhood mean, or the joy of heart that beats with heart. Children have been taught to sing:

> I want to be an angel,
> And with the angels stand.

But does any one really want that? What do the angels know of the gladness of life, or the stinging whip of pain that the mortal body learns? What can such serene and spiritual creatures understand of those heights and gulfs of experience which only a sensory system allied with a spirit can bring to consciousness? It is the glorious truth of the Incarnation that, even

into the heart of the Godhead, has been brought, and remains for evermore, "a fellow-feeling for our pains." The doctrine of the Incarnation has a hundred implications in regard to the human body. But chiefly it should be noted that it is the Christian lands which have reverenced and cared for the body as they ought. Where under Buddhism or Mohammedanism is a school of medicine worthy of the name? Where in the lands that own no subjection to the Incarnate Son of God are such infirmaries or hospitals as are the glory of our Empire?

Our vile body, indeed! The skill of science and the tender care of human sympathy have been elicited at their fullness just by that frail partner of our souls, so humble and so humbling often, and yet the frame that Jesus wore.

While life lasts, however, there will remain some shadow of "humiliation" over the body, and it is to a brighter day that St. Paul looked for its full redemption. "We groan within ourselves," he wrote, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our body." "I believe in the resurrection of the dead." The soul with an organism, how changed, how composed, how compatible with a spiritual life, we do not know; but still a soul, not naked but clothed upon, a soul with an organism—that is what the great teacher bade us look for. We have no experience of a pure and unfettered spirit in this world (though we must think of God in such a way); nor are we to meet such an experience in the world beyond. The soul is to express itself through a body still, in the only way we can conceive of such expression. But it is a pure bride that the spirit finds in that serene world—a body that is tender to every touch of highest things, and the choice vehicle

of every thought of good : a body cleansed of all gross accretions, and responsive as never here to every impression of truth and beauty, and expressional as never here of every refinement and shade of feeling : a body "fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

III

THE APPROACH TO RELIGION—MYSTICAL AND INTELLECTUAL

Responsibility for Belief.—How far are we responsible for our belief? That we shall suffer if we disbelieve is certain: but how far are we guilty if our belief is wrong? No truth can be denied with impunity in whatever sphere it is found. A man may cherish scepticism regarding the worth of vaccination, but when the scourge of smallpox falls upon the community he and others will be made to pay for the vagaries of his belief. So, in the highest sphere of religious doctrine, if a man be an agnostic he is living in a sadder world and is preparing himself for a future in which his environment will be utterly unsympathetic and strange. It is quite plain that he will be punished for his unbelief: but how far is he morally guilty? If with an earnest, unprejudiced, conscientious spirit he had sought for an intellectual rest in the great beliefs of Christianity, and had sorrowfully to own that he had not found it, should he be in God's sight a sinner; and would his conscience affirm the justice of it if, here and hereafter, God's vengeance was denounced on his soul?

It seems fairly certain that this is not so. Principal Caird, in one of his University Sermons, dealt with this theme, and as an illustration gave a wonderfully

eloquent account of the career of those singular brothers, John Henry Newman, author of the *Grammar of Assent*, Cardinal priest of the Roman Church, and Francis Newman, author of *Phases of Faith* and an agnostic. Two careers more diverse there could not have been ; nor two more different minds. One was a far loftier nature than the other, more spiritual, more gracious, more serene. Yet both were earnest truth-seekers. And their search for truth landed them—the one in opinions which seem to many people superstitious, and the other in a desolate and homeless scepticism. " Shall we believe," asked Principal Caird, " that either of those high and truth-loving souls shall be condemned and abandoned by God ? Is it not, I do not say more charitable but more truly reverential, to think that their errors and difficulties were but the discipline by which the God of truth was leading them onwards to Himself, and that in His own time and way, from the labyrinth in which they seemed to be lost, His loving hand guided them out into the light of that eternal truth for which here they so passionately yet so vainly longed ? "

Every heart that has felt the Spirit of Christ must echo such a thought—certain that the blessing which Christ pronounced upon those who " seek " is not forfeited on account of their temporary failure, and that one day, here or hereafter, they will " find."

But when this has been said, the whole question of our responsibility for what we believe has by no means been exhausted. People say, We must face the facts, and yield conviction where the facts are found. Yes : but we may choose for ourselves what facts we are willing to see, and we may wilfully shut our eyes to others. We may accustom ourselves to a narrow

range both of phenomena and of mental processes. We may seriously damage the instrument of belief. In a hundred ways our character will act and react on our opinions. While in many cases it is true that we are not responsible for what we believe, in many others—and possibly in a far greater number of cases—we need to be warned lest there be in us an evil heart of unbelief.

The nature of religious belief in itself makes this evident. Such belief is not reached by the same processes as mathematical or even historical proof. Let a man be shown a proposition in Euclid, and have the lines of its demonstration explained to him, and, if he has understood the argument, he cannot avoid the conclusion. His character has no influence on his judgement. A Saint Francis of Assisi and a Caesar Borgia must have accepted the same belief. In a historical question like, say, the character of Henry VIII. or the problem of Queen Mary's guilt there is perhaps more room for the influence of disposition upon opinion, though there also a merely intellectual judgement is the only sound one. But, when we gain the spiritual realm, our beliefs are rather an affirmation of the whole nature than a pure decision of the rationalising mind.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength": that is to say, Christianity claims the homage of the whole man. The heart is named first as the central focus from which all the rays of the moral life go forth. Then come the three forms of activity in which that life manifests itself—the soul, the mind, the strength; or as we should say to-day the feelings, the intellect, the

will. It is thus by the whole nature rather than by any single faculty that the highest truth is reached. Take, for example, the arguments for Theism—the proofs of the existence of God which are at the basis of all religion. They call them big names, the ontological, the cosmological, the teleological, the moral proof. So far as these merely intellectual arguments go they are powerful and sufficient. But no one ever believed in God on account of the arguments that demonstrate His being. The best of them leaves a hiatus between intellectual satisfaction and that conviction which is worth calling belief. It is by the combination of many reasons and many faiths and many aspirations of the spirit: it is by the road by which a child believes in its parents' affection, or a bride gives her unshakable trust into her lover's hands: it is by the whole nature and not by a part of it that a man says the first article of the Creed, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

If all this be true, it follows that everything which affects any part of the nature—body, soul, or spirit—will have its share in affecting our beliefs; and, therefore, in so far as we are responsible for our character, we are responsible also for its results upon our thought.

It is not only the positive statements of Holy Scripture which make us sure of the relation between goodness and the vision of truth; all our knowledge of the best souls has made it clear. Let a man ask himself, for instance, what it is in the life of the Master Himself which gives so exquisite an assurance of His intimate communion with the mind of God. It is not a sense of the majesty of His intellect, though that is

there: it is not the piercingness and inevitableness of His judgement upon men and things: far less is it any laboured justification of the ways of God with men —it is rather the rare and serene atmosphere of holiness amid which He walks, the impression of His goodness, the assurance that here is One who knows because He loves.

St. John, who lay on the Lord's bosom—whence came his intimate knowledge of the Lord? It was not from a mind more subtle or more powerful than that of the other disciples; nor certainly from a greater logical grasp of the relation of the things he saw to the ultimate realities where their explanation must be found. Rather he saw so clearly because he loved so much: he believed because he was good. And it has been so always—

> O hearts of love: O souls that turn,
> Like sunflowers, to the pure and best!
> To you the truth is manifest,
> For they the mind of Christ discern
> Who lean like John upon His breast.

Holy Scripture has specially pointed two virtues which help towards belief, two ways in which character reacts upon faith.

The first is Purity. "Blessed are the pure in heart," our Lord Himself said, "for they shall see God." A libertine does not believe in woman's virtue or in man's honour: and, disbelieving in humanity, he is in the fair way to disbelieve in God. The American evangelist Dr. Torrey used to tell a story concerning a young man whom he had known and who, after an interval of years, disclosed to him that he had lost his faith in Christianity and had become an

infidel. "My young friend," said Dr. Torrey to him, "what have you been doing?" The evangelist did not suggest that in every case such an explanation was the true one. But in the case of which he was thinking—and in many another—the man did not disbelieve so much on account of anything he had learned as on account of something he had become. There is "an evil heart of unbelief"; "with the heart a man believeth unto righteousness." No one who has experience of life, and who forms his views, not like some closet philosopher in a removed existence but in close acquaintance with human nature, will deny that a coarsened mind has often had as much to do with scepticism as any honest grappling with intellectual doubt. Robert Burns told in memorable words the result on the mind of one kind of sensuality:

> O it hardens a' the heart
> And petrifies the feeling.

Everything that makes the taste grosser, that poisons the springs of the moral nature, that puts us out of affinity with the spiritual, the gentle, the pure, most certainly also banishes God farther from us, makes Christ more a name of ancient history, and the Holy Spirit a meaningless and barren phrase.

Meekness is the other avenue to belief which the Bible has pointed out. There is no greater obstacle to faith than intellectual and spiritual pride. "The meek will He teach His way." In the religious novel, more popular some years ago than it is now, nothing was more distressing than the presumption with which its heroes cast themselves adrift from the wisdom of their fathers and the traditions in which their minds were formed, and were like Robert Elsmere

" when they woke in the morning prepared to find everything an open question." That sort of vanity could only have a brief enough day. But there is at present a vogue of books of what is called popular " science " which attempt to deal with religion. In sixpenny books the faith of generations is finally disposed of in the name of certain conclusions of experiment and investigation and inductive proof. The books are by eminent enough men. But their tone of airy confidence is disconcerting ; and most of what is called " science " in them is in no sense rightly described by that name—it is speculation, philosophy, true or false, but at least not demonstrable by any method science can claim. About ether and the ultimate nature of matter and the theory of atoms, and so forth, there is much that is interesting, if little that is fresher than in the days of the Greek materialists ; but there is no special reason for accepting our philosophy from a physiologist however eminent and famous he may be. One remembers Dr. Johnson's solemn irony about such a man. " He who is growing great in electrifying a bottle wonders to see the world engaged in prattle about peace and war." It is not too severe a judgement upon such minds to say with Dean Church, that no pedantry or narrowness which theologians ever showed can equal the pedantry and narrowness of many who are engaged in what they call the emancipation of the mind from superstition. " Slaves of an imagination moulded and coloured by a single uniform set of familiar phenomena, slaves of customs and modes of thought which they have lost the power to review and control by rising above them and beyond them, they are, with the latest and richest eloquence of the English language,

as formal and rigid, as childishly unreal, as much in antagonism with plain things, which are certain if anything is certain, as the most fantastic of the schoolmen." Humility is the road to knowledge, and "the meek He will teach His way." Certain postulates we must make. If we could raise the standard of Christian living in the country we should do more against agnosticism than by much apologetic. One sincere and simple Christian is better than many books of Christian Evidences.

Thus it seems to be clear that, as character and opinion are closely bound together, we have a responsibility not only for what we do but for what we believe.

After coming to the conclusion that we are responsible, at least in some measure, for what we believe, we proceed to ask where the methods of approach to Christian faith are to be found. Probably the first and the commonest answer is in terms of mysticism.

Mysticism.—In a book of reminiscences of Mr. Gladstone it is told about that great man, that on the day he was commanded to form his first administration he went, as in every emergency great or small, to receive the Holy Communion. It was noticed that, after he had been given the sacrament, he remained kneeling at the altar rails. Other communicants went up and came back; but he kept his place there, evidently absorbed in communion with his Saviour. He was there till the end of the service. He had lost all thought of man. What was the statesman doing at that hour? If we had asked him, he would have answered us, in the words of the Communion office,

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"Then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us: we are one with Christ, and Christ with us." The avenues of the senses were closed, and the soul was grasping the supreme reality in that apprehension by thought and feeling which is the essence of mysticism.

Another great Englishman of the last generation, the poet Tennyson, has described a state of trance into which he often passed when he was alone. "This has come upon me," he said, "through repeating my own name to myself silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being; and this not a confused state, but the clearest—the surest of the surest—utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility—the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life." If one had asked Tennyson for an explanation of that state, he would have answered that it was the fellowship of his soul with the Soul of all souls, not through sense-representation or the forms of the logical understanding, but by an immediate and mystical communion. Even such was the experience he made Sir Galahad find:

A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

That such a mystical realisation of the presence of God in Christ is the kernel of the religion of common people also there need be no doubt. Their instincts

are nearly always true, though the reasons they adduce to support them may be inadequate. "Mysticism," said John Wesley once, "is just heart religion." If we seek the devotional language in which the Christian consciousness has found its readiest expression, we see that it is always deeply tinged with mysticism. The most obvious example is in our hymns. The language of thought and emotion is for ever being strained in them to express a realisation of God's presence and Christ's love, which the soul knows, and yet sees to be beyond its speech. One of the greatest of mediaeval mystics was St. Bernard of Clairvaux. No words could better describe a Christian's experience than those of his which we use so often :—

O Hope of every contrite heart,
O Joy of all the meek,
To those who fall how kind Thou art!
How good to those who seek!

But what to those who find? Ah! this
Nor tongue nor pen can show;
The love of Jesus, what it is
None but His lovers know.

"Expertus potest credere." Here is the familiar mystical idea of the Lord as the Bridegroom of the soul, and here the ineffable experience of knowledge and love which Christians of all ages have shared, but which they have found it impossible to describe with tongue or pen. If one had asked St. Bernard what was the fact of the religious life at the back of such poetry, he would have answered (these are his words): "The Christian who seeks divine truth must ascend to the higher life of the Spirit through love and humility; then through discursive considera-

tion of divine truth he must proceed to intuitive contemplation, in which state moments of ecstatic absorption in the object contemplated will be granted him — transient anticipations of the perfect self-forgetfulness of the glorified soul hereafter." That is an almost accurate statement of the method of all mystics ; and it naturally leads us from the ground of experience, where it is right to start, into the philosophical explanation of this great movement of human thought.

The basis in the facts of consciousness might, of course, be laid far wider. Professor Starbuck and Professor James have collected a remarkable series of testimonies to the mystical state. The Americans are far ahead of us in experimental psychology, and especially in that department of religious enquiry in which conclusions the most astounding are established by statistics the most fallacious. Yet in the midst of much that can only excite surprise, there are many results of their investigations to which permanent value will be attached. A brief summary of the result of enquiries into the mystical state may be gathered from some American books.

Many answer such an enquiry by saying, "I have striven to come into immediate communion with God : but that has never been : He seems to elude me," or, "It seems as if I have to be content with receiving God at second hand." Some persons are not able to specify any experience which cannot be classified under the ordinary workings of the mind. This is what might have been looked for. There are people with no ear for music : and those who do appreciate music grade from the school-girl at her scales up to the subtlest interpreters of the human spirit. It is

so also with religion, in which there is genius at the top, and at the bottom the deaf and blind.

Other answers to the enquiry about the mystical state speak of occasional glimpses, at wide intervals of time—reminding one of Porphyry's statement that during the six years which he spent in intimate friendship with Plotinus, that eminent mystic experienced union with God only four times. A characteristic testimony of this class is that of Henry Ward Beecher: "There are times," he says, "when it is not I that is talking: when I am caught up and carried away so that I know not whether I am in the body or out of the body: when I think things in the pulpit that I could never think in the study: and when I have feelings that are so different from any that belong to the lower or normal condition that I can neither regulate them nor understand them."

Yet another class of answers to enquiries about the mystical state have no rapt experiences of which to tell, but only a settled impression of a constant fellowship with the divine. A typical illustration of such communion is given in that very interesting book *The Practice of the Presence of God*, by Brother Lawrence, a Carmelite monk at Paris in the seventeenth century. His duty in the monastery was the humblest, the care of the kitchen, and there he records, "The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer: in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament."

There are a sufficient number of testimonies to such a mystical state to make one sure that it is not an uncommon phenomenon even for the uneducated, such

as Brother Lawrence was, to be haunted with an immediate sense of the Infinite, and to feel that there is more in experience than thought can formulate or words can tell. And surely there are few even of the most logical and formally regulated minds who cannot speak of such moments that have come to them, moments rare and exquisite, in which visions have seemed to float upon their minds from an intellectual world larger than this, where there is a clearer air, and they have seen, in glimpses, transient it may be, but unspeakably precious, the meaning of the world and of life and of the government that is at the back of things. If that be so, then we are the better prepared to ask for the explanation that can be offered for a phenomenon of an interest so profound.

There are two ways of reaching God. The first is that which has appealed the most to our fellow-countrymen. They have sought the ultimate reality by what they called the "philosophy of common sense." Setting themselves over against God—standing, as it were, outside of Him—they have looked for the signs of His presence in Nature, and have interpreted History as the revelation of His mind. Paley's "argument of the watch" is the crudest illustration of their methods, but it is by no means the least characteristic. There is no use in under-valuing either the processes or the results of this theology of common sense, and its voyage of discovery to see if in the world there be signs of a God. But its conclusions have often borne little enough conviction, and by their very positiveness have irritated the souls of the devout. The metallic and pragmatic intelligence has gone to form that Hard Church which the late Mr. Hutton of the *Spectator* described in one

of his essays. The hard churchman has his ready theological explanation of everything in life, his cut-and-dry theory of all events. For him there is no mystery land, no twilight of knowledge; everything is sharply outlined in the clear light of dogmatic teaching. Any man whose religious thought has been more than an echo has met and been repelled by the hard churchman's scolding orthodoxy. Well has Dr. Martineau said about it: "Those who tell me too much about God, who speak as if they knew His motive and His plans in everything, who are never at a loss to explain the reason of every structure and the tender mercy of every event, who carry themselves through the solemn glades of Providence with the springing steps and the jaunty air of a familiar, do but drive me by the very definiteness of their assurance into an indefinite agony of doubt, and impel me to cry, 'Ask of me less, and I shall give you all.'" When mysticism appeared in the mediaeval Church, with St. Bernard of Clairvaux, it was as a revolt against the dialectical spirit of men like Abélard. When it appeared in England with the Cambridge Platonists, it was as a reaction, not against Romanism, but against Calvinism, a revolt of the reverences against that delight in definition which has been the curse of Protestantism. To such mystics God was an experience rather than an object. They could not find Him in any voyage of discovery through Nature. They go forward but He is not there, and backward but they cannot behold Him.

Neither can the Supreme be adequately discovered in History. He may be buried among the records of the past, just as He may be entangled in the midst of Nature's laws. Nowhere, it is true, was He revealed

as He was revealed in Christ; but He is not to be looked for only in the Christ of history. "I want a living Christ," said George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, that mystical sect which has been most influential in England. "I want a living Christ: you are worshipping a dead Christ." "The God that ye took from a printed book" has only an external appeal to living men. It is almost startling to discover that this protest of mysticism was made in the very earliest days of the Church. St. John's Gospel may be read as an intentional, purposed effort to show that the Master was not only a character of history, not only or chiefly that, but the Abiding Light and Life of men. And as one has read the words of that great mystic, St. Paul, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more," one has seen how little he valued what are called the "evidences," and how the experience of the divine presence was to him incomparably more precious than any record of the great career. One has sometimes fancied that St. Paul's attitude to the other apostles was somewhat like that of a happily married woman who is a little jealous of her husband's friends, who knew him before she did, but also a little scornful of their presumption in thinking that, merely on account of early acquaintance, they know anything at all comparatively of the dear companion of her life. In such a way mysticism has always been somewhat indifferent to the facts of history. Its great exponent, William Law, would have every Christian repeat in his own experience the whole career of his Master—divine birth, baptism, death, resurrection, and ascension. And all of them refuse to see in the outward tokens of God's pres-

ence, in the vicissitudes of the time-life, an adequate approach to the Supreme. The first way to God, that of the school of common sense, can never lead them to His heart.

They take another way. Believing that God made man in His image, and that man's soul is a mirror, in which (if only it be clean and pure) the divine can best be seen, they cease from analysing and methodising, and joyfully go forth to meet their God.

> Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and spirit with spirit can meet ;
> Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

Mysticism would not, indeed, attempt to explain the secret of such knowledge, such fellowship. Individual mystics deal in phrases about subliminal consciousness and so forth, and seek the aid of physiology to eke out the imperfection of their theories. But for most it is sufficient to say that here is an Experience—a fact of consciousness as sure as any in life. If we want an analogy to it we are bidden to find it in our apprehension of poetry or beauty or music or human love. Socrates, in his *Apology*, tells the result of his questioning of the poets about their methods. "Taking up some of their poems, which appeared to me most elaborately finished, I questioned them as to their meaning. I am ashamed, O Athenians, to tell you the truth : however, it must be told. Almost all who were present could have given a better account of them than those by whom they had been composed. I soon discovered this, therefore, with regard to the poets, that they do not effect their object by wisdom, but by a certain natural inspiration." That is pure mysticism. But there is no more complete or more

satisfactory explanation of poetry than that which Socrates gave. Ask a great interpreter of Nature about the meaning of the outside world for the soul of man—read Wordsworth, and we shall find the same phenomenon: "Sensation, soul, and form all melted in him." "Words needed none; his spirit drank the spectacle." Beauty and sublimity came in an immediate apprehension, utterly apart from the logical understanding. It is as impossible to describe in words, yet quite as sure a fact of consciousness as the love of man for woman or of woman for man—that great root of social happiness, that turning-point of the human tragedy, which yet has no terminology that can be quoted without exciting a smile.

This, then, is the way by which mysticism would draw near to God. It utterly distrusts the senses and the logical understanding. It is as sceptical as Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* concerning the possibility of reaching the Absolute by reasoning. But, like Kant's second and positive effort, it makes a great confident leap towards certainty by throwing the whole nature—thought, emotion, will—into one sublime affirmation. Man, because he is a spirit, must be near to, and must be able to commune with, the Great Spirit, the soul of man finding communion with the Soul of all souls.

It is impossible to detail the methods which mystical teachers have taken to reach the highest results of intuitive knowledge. They nearly all trace three stages in what they call the Upward Way. First is the purgative life, the life of discipline and duty. In the second stage, the illuminative life, every faculty is concentrated upon God: real virtue has begun, because self-denial is ended; and good deeds are the

outcome of a delight to do God's will. The final stage is the unitive or contemplative life in which the soul sees God face to face, and finds a fellowship of ever-deepening union with Him. It may truly be said that the root idea of them all is found in the words of our Master: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

It is not possible to make any scientific classification of the mystics such as has frequently been attempted. All the divisions overlap. The best definition should set in one category the Eastern Mystic, who follows what is called "the negative way," and seeks a mere oblivion of consciousness in fellowship with the Absolute. He deals in asceticism and ecstasies and visions, of which the better type of Mystics are impatient and even scornful. Though this mysticism is in great favour in the Roman Church, and is the more favoured the more it is marked by miraculous accompaniments, it really brings discredit on the name. Modern psychology has robbed it of its mysterious aspects, and has shown that its most distinctive phenomena can be explained and reproduced by self-hypnotism. In the other category should be set the Mysticism which can claim the name of Christian: that which seeks fellowship with God through the mediation of Christ: the mysticism which is perhaps seen at its best in the Cambridge Platonists and William Law: the mysticism which seeks not God's gifts, but God Himself, and because it believes that God is for ever revealing Himself to His people, would set itself to "hear what God the Lord would speak."

It is equally impossible to give any outline of the growth of mystical theology. There is a meagre history of mysticism. Its main features can be

discerned in almost all its exponents; and from its nature it has never been susceptible of a classified and methodical statement. The best book in English concerning the whole subject is Professor Inge's Bampton Lecture. But many owe a permanent indebtedness to Vaughan's *Hours with the Mystics*. The method of that book is almost repellent; it gives scant justice to the English Mystics, who are among the greatest of the school; and its attitude "de haut en bas" towards men of profound philosophy and pious life is merely irritating. But with all its faults, Vaughan's book has not yet found a substitute.

If one would go to the study of the mystical writers themselves, it is not well to begin with such a man as Jacob Boehme (1575)—that "man of a mighty mind," as Hegel called him—but rather with the sermons of Tauler (born 1300), and the restrained and sober pages of that book which Luther valued so much—*The German Theology* (1330). In English there is no better guide than William Law, the disciple of Boehme. The Letters of Samuel Rutherford of Anwoth, written in 1636, are a singularly noble exposition of those thoughts which come from ardent attachment to, and intimate fellowship with, the mind of Christ.

It is right, before one urges the lessons for modern Christianity which mysticism has to bear, that one should acknowledge the dangers with which in all its history that type of religious thought has been menaced.

It may be freely granted that in some of its forms it has been too impatient of theology. Let it be admitted that the essence of religion is not an acceptance of logical propositions about God, but a consciousness of His presence; yet it is not unavailing nor useless

that such a consciousness should be analysed, and that the speculative reason should enquire into its ultimate implications. A man can hear and see without any acquaintance with acoustics and optics: yet those disciplines are of value in correcting defects of sight and hearing, and in greatly magnifying the power of those faculties. So the wisest mystics, such as the Cambridge Platonists, had no sympathy with what was called "the denial of reason," for that, said one of them, "is to deny a divine light." Mysticism, in many of its forms, has neglected the sources of the knowledge of God which are available in Scripture and science, and, trusting overmuch in one avenue of approach to God — that of the Inner Light, it has suffered loss; it has wanted the iron in its bones which is got from the logical reason and the revelation of God in the field of history.

The moral dangers attending the mystical frame of mind can never be wisely neglected. Truly it is said in the Upanishads — the ancient oracle of the mystics of the East — that the path of release is as fine as a razor. On one side lie the deep gulfs of madness, on the other the abysses of sensuality. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life. One need only think of the Indian yogi mistaking his cataleptic unconsciousness for absorption into the being of God, to see the danger on one side. And as one is offended by the erotic sensuousness of St. Teresa, and of popular hymns like that beginning, "Safe in the arms of Jesus" (which such mysticism as St. Teresa's has inspired), one is sorrowfully convinced of the reality of the danger on the other side. The Song of Solomon has its place in revelation; but it is a dangerous sphere for the

allegorising and sentimental mind. It has ever been the mystic's favourite sphere. An anarchic and self-regarding subjectivity is also a pitfall of this type of Christian thinking. And, practically, it may lead, as in the case of St. Angela of Foligno, to a torpid selfishness, in which she gave thanks for the death of mother, husband, and children because, in her pleasant phrase, "they were great obstacles on her way to God." Whenever the Eastern Mysticism of what is called "the negative way" has infected Christian minds, there have been such moral dangers. A quiescence, weary, solitary, selfish—the piety of intellectual suicide—is the outcome of such a mysticism. A soul allied to the Spirit of Christ finds its expression, not in voluptuous indolence of thought, but in the beneficent activity of all its powers. Nothing has been more remarkable in the history of Christian Mysticism than the fact that profound and pious thinkers, absorbed in communion with God, were also restless and tireless leaders of philanthropic enterprise. St. Bernard organised the vast international movement of the Second Crusade; St. Francis inaugurated a great order; Tauler threw himself with intense devotion into the task of caring for the victims of the "Black death" of 1348; Fénelon was an energetic and successful bishop; Madame Guyon was a capable woman of affairs.

It is not right, therefore, to dwell overmuch upon the aberrations into which Mysticism sometimes ran, and into which, by its very nature, it was always tempted to run. It becomes us better to recall the services which it has rendered and is rendering to Christian thought. It is specially of importance to trace its connection with the exigencies of modern religion and the modern Church.

1. Mysticism effects an alliance between religion and the scientific temper of the day. The genius of our time has taken to empiricism. It distrusts first principles and worships facts. Mysticism, as much as the latest chemistry or physics, rests on the testimony of experience, and appeals for its verification to the common consciousness of men. It may be that every one is not an expert observer; it may be that some fields of observation are difficult to reach; it may be that the eyes of some observers are obscured by impurity or prejudice: but it is in the region of observation and experiment that mysticism delights to dwell. Just as it is the barest fact of history that when Romanism grew material, it was mysticism that saved it; and when Protestantism grew dogmatic, it was mysticism that saved it; so now when a hundred spectres with names of learning and science frighten us, the home of faith is still in mystical experience. Religion is safe while there are men and women to say with all their heart, "I love Christ."

2. Mysticism is in touch with the most recent development of theological thinking—even with that which was for a time called the "New Theology." The exponents of that re-statement of our faith would say that their starting-point is a re-emphasis of the Christian belief in the divine Immanence in the Universe and in mankind. That may not perhaps be a true description of the trend of thinking in Germany, where Ritschl's school are the enemies of mysticism. But it is a true enough account of the predominant trend of opinion in England and in America, and, one may add, of the movement in France which is associated with the name of Auguste Sabatier. It is of the essence of mysticism to believe in the Immanence of God, to

believe that man and God are in personal relationship, not like two creatures at opposite sides of a river, one crying for benefits, the other throwing his rare beneficence across the stream. "In him we live and move and have our being." In the full and happy use of all our powers we should—even when we consciously do not realise the relationship—feel some kinship with the divine.

Take it on what might seem the lowest level. It was not altogether without meaning that the old nature religions have associated the passion of sex with the worship of the divine. If a man is not a mere brute beast, there is a real connection between the two emotions. Did not Goethe tell how the primitive passion made a man feel "his soul expanding to a Deity" "while his love-rapture o'er Creation flows"? Some tenderness of self-sacrifice makes even the gross divine.

Take it on a higher level, that of intellectual satisfaction. Who would think of numbering the late Mr. Huxley among the Mystics? Yet how otherwise can one explain this saying of his in his *Life and Letters*: "In these moments I feel that the real pleasure, the true sphere, lies in the feeling of self-development, in the sense of power and growing oneness with the great Spirit of abstract truth"? He goes on to add that "Science teaches the great truth which is embodied in the Christian conception of entire surrender to the Will of God." A curious commentary on that statement is found in the testimony given by an American thinker that it was in moments of intellectual doubt that he most realised the presence of God.

Take it on a higher level still, that of the moralised life. Can there be uncertainty about the experience that after making a conscious sacrifice, after fulfilling

dutifully an irksome task, there is a sense that the soul is in contact with the ultimate realities and the soul of things, and recognises duty to be the " stern daughter of the Voice of God " ?

Then reach the highest level, that of spiritual experience. There are testimonies in every Christian household to a sense of divine leading and blessing.

The teaching of all this experience is plain. If God be indeed immanent in man, we are reaching Him, as we should expect, in all the happy, free, natural activities of the soul, in pure love, in unprejudiced truth-seeking, in unselfish benevolence, in devout and earnest prayer. The experience may have another explanation ; but the readiest and most credible is that the doctrine of the immanence of God is true.

3. The modern craving for the Unity of the Church finds in mysticism a meeting-place for Christian minds. Mystical piety is the great reconciler. The very fact that the theologians argue whether its affinities are with Romanism or Protestantism is itself a proof that it mediates between the two.

At first sight, Mysticism might appear to be the natural ally of Protestantism. Its fundamental position—that the knowledge of God is direct and personal — might seem to make it sit lightly to authority and the institution. And as a matter of fact the attitude of the Inquisition to the Mystics was one of suspicious watchfulness. St. Teresa, St. Juan de la Cruz, Ignatius himself were all objects of distrust, and did not win ecclesiastical approbation until after a long series of tribulations. It is equally a matter of fact that the greater number and perhaps also the most illustrious names of the Mystics belong to reformed branches of the Church.

On the other hand, there are great Roman Mystics, St. Francis of Assisi perhaps the greatest. And Harnack thinks the system so essentially allied with Romanism that he boldly says, "A mystic who does not become a Catholic is a dilettante." This is a hard saying, but one knows what he means. It is a matter of fact that amid the accumulated and embarrassing ceremonies of Rome devout souls find in mysticism the natural home of personal religion:

> Moravian hymn and Roman chant
> In one devotion blend,
> To speak the soul's sincerest want
> Of Him the inmost friend.

Is not a suggestion found here that in the essentials of religion, the communion of the soul with God, is found the meeting-place of all Christian men? The guide to such a meeting-place is Mysticism.

4. Mysticism reclaims amid the pressure of modern life its due place for Contemplation in religion. Were it a protest and no more, this testimony on behalf of the meditative life would be of inestimable worth. Hurried and distracted as life is, we can hardly even understand what Amiel meant when he said that "action is only coarsened thought." Our instincts are all in arms against the profound and pious men who set as their ideal the stripping of the mind of sense perceptions and elaborated reasoning, and its sinking back into an absorbed and silent fellowship with God. Even in the Church, with its many organisations, the place of meditation is apt to be forgotten. The careful and troubled service of many Marthas is thought the better part rather than the holy receptivity which Mary showed. In the midst of

such activities there is real worth in a study of the writings of the mystics — after the Holy Scriptures themselves the best manuals of devotion which the Church holds.

5. Modern phases of thought fall into their due significance beside the permanent elements of religion which mysticism discloses. All the really permanent elements of religion come to us under a mystical guise. It is not evidences and teleologies which are their foundation, but the universal instincts of the human soul. Unlettered men perceive them; little children have known them better than the wise; poor sufferers on their painful beds, hardly capable of consecutive thought, cling to them with an assurance which reason could never bring. And, therefore, these are the lasting things. People criticise holy books till one wonders what they will leave us of our Bible. The externals of worship become sometimes an intolerable and offensive burden to spiritual minds. But the mystic is secure from such assaults of the temporary, the passing. His heaven is in no far-off sphere, and depends on no books, no churches, no creeds. Nothing can separate him from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord. A notable instance of such an indifference to the transitory was seen in the famous General Gordon. His favourite book was the *Christ Mystical* of Bishop Hall. With it, or some such devout meditation, by his side, he never seemed to miss the helps to the religious life which public worship and a Christian society bring to us. Alone in the desert, with Heathens or Mohammedans, and a few English officers, Gordon continued the same inner life of converse with God which he would have lived in an English parish. He seemed to sit entirely free of the externals of religion.

No stroke of circumstance could deprive him of his heaven. Maeterlinck has said about all literature, "The mystical truth cannot grow old or die—a work only grows old in proportion to its anti-mysticism." About religion that could be said as truly. A mystical religion cannot be affected by criticism, science, or external environment; that religion only is in perilous case which is anti-mystical.

6. More important than any aspect of Modern Criticism of the Bible is the mystical understanding of it which reaches to its heart. Much of the deepest teaching of Holy Scripture is open only to the mind which has some sympathy with the mystical attitude of thought. Christ in you the hope of glory: God dwelling in man and man in God: We living and moving and having our being in Him: The Christian buried with Christ in baptism, crucified to the world, and raised again, even as Christ rose in the glory of the Father—what a hidden mystery is in words like these if we have thought nothing of the immediate communion of the soul with God or the indwelling of His Holy Spirit! "Wouldst thou plant for eternity?" said Thomas Carlyle—himself of the school of mystics —"then plant into the deep, infinite faculties of man, his fantasy and heart. Wouldst thou plant for year and day? then plant into his shallow, superficial faculties his self-love and arithmetical understanding." From its beginning to its end—and notably by its deepest, devoutest souls, St. John and St. Paul—the Bible has spoken to that in man which is the deepest; and it will be—it must be—to us for ever in some degree a book sealed and withdrawn if we know nothing and care nothing for the mystical things of which Wordsworth wrote—

Those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised.

Those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence.

Mysticism in Experience.—All of us have our summits of experience some time in life—our choice and elect hours. One thing and another brings us to such rare and beautiful moments.

Sometimes it is the mere thrill of contact with nature in its lovelier phases that moves us. Our minds go wandering, at such a suggestion, to hours at which our spirits were finely touched and we were lifted, as it were, out of ourselves into something like ecstasy, into a frame of mind and spirit exquisite and rare.

Or is it the "days of the gods" in youth to which we turn for the memory of such supreme experiences? Those of our own age were round us—the comrades, the companions, keen, cultivated, eager—the choice spirits who made that time for us as if it were heaven.

Or was it some book that opened for us the door of a new world and gave us, as Lamb wrote to Wordsworth about the reading of "The Excursion," "a day of heaven"? Most people can remember such unfamiliar

and arresting thoughts at the reading of a great book when, as the poet wrote of Chapman's *Homer*, the reader was "like some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken."

Or perhaps it was love—the love of man or woman—that makes some day, somehow, stand out from all the rest, and however long we live it will be the day, the hour in life for us.

It was such a time that Jesus tasted on a certain Sunday when He rode into Jerusalem; it was the elect time of His career as the Man of Sorrows. Then at last men knew Him as He was, and owned Him, and things were as they should be.

Those high hours of which we all know something have a value for us as much as any trial or sorrow. It takes all the experiences of life to make an adequate school for character. And encouragement and praise and high hopefulness do as much for us as any ploughshare of the soul. If we were to believe some representations of our religion, pain is its only teacher; asceticism is its only discipline. In the Life of the late Cardinal Vaughan there is a horrible tale of a spiked bracelet which the good man wore, and which, because it did not pain him enough, he occasionally drove by force into the flesh of his arm. If mere suffering be so good for ourselves as that, why should we ever want to relieve suffering in others? Why should we not regard the Grand Inquisitor as also the Grand Benefactor? Why should we not be zealous to increase the amount of the world's pain? Those have learned of Jesus badly who forget His serene and joyful spirit.

The discipline of happiness and popularity and prosperity has its divinely appointed place for us.

Indeed, if we read aright the signs of the times, that is to be the characteristic discipline of modern life. Negatively, pain has been diminished in our time to an extraordinary degree by the use of anæsthetics, and by a hundred appliances for the relief of distress. Positively, the growth of opportunities of recreation and reading and travel have added enormously to the world's fund of enjoyment. And the training of new generations will be much more in the proper and intelligent choice of pleasures than, as in the past, in the endurance of pain. It may well be that the example of Christ will be sought ever increasingly, not as the Man of Sorrows, but as the wise and holy Master whom His disciples loved and followed, and who filled their lives with triumphant joy.

Closely allied to all mystical experiences is the superstition which may be roughly described as Magic.

Magic.—In a passage in Deuteronomy we are introduced to one of the most fascinating and one of the most dangerous regions in which the mind of man can roam —the field of the occult. Wherever men have lived, in every age, they have longed to reach the secrets of Providence and of the future, and magical arts have been among the methods they have pursued. Popular religion has always been deeply tinged with such superstitions.

One has only to read one's Bible to see how firmly magic gripped the great monotheistic Hebrew race. The first book of the Bible tells of Jacob's amulets and his dreams, and of the cup with which Joseph divined. And the New Testament has no more picturesque episodes than those which are connected with Elymas the Sorcerer and Simon the Mage and the

destruction of the magical books at Ephesus at the instigation of St. Paul.

A full list of the dabblers in the occult is given in Deuteronomy, the eighteenth chapter. Nine different types of magic workers are enumerated there, ending with the "necromancer"—the consulter of the spirits of the dead, such as the Witch of Endor who raised up the ghost of Samuel to speak to Saul. Upon the whole nine of these professors of magical rites the Deuteronomist pronounces an unqualified condemnation. Whether they were benign in their intentions—healing by incantations and averting evil by charms—or whether they used the black art of sorcery to bring damage to the unfortunate victims of their spells, one and all they were declared to be "an abomination to the Lord."

The dealers in the occult are with us still. In spite of modern scientific culture: in spite of (or it may be on account of) the growth of the sceptical spirit concerning the supernatural, the professor of the mysterious is as powerful a person as ever he was, and he works as much of harm. If we got any one who knows the simple peoples of Africa to tell us what is their scourge and brooding fear, he would harrow us with tales of the witch-doctors who are the only interpreters of nature and the only authorities on the origin of disease. Over vast regions of Africa witch-craft is a desolating superstition, the sorrow and shame of which it is difficult to realise. Yet among educated Western peoples there are practices even more harmful, because they tear the nature into a painful dualism—one half owning the abject foolishness of its beliefs, the other trembling lest they be true. There are hundreds of people in every city who have some such shamefaced inclination to fancy that their future can be read from the palms of

their hands. They go to creatures called " palmists " to have their fortunes told; and, though they know quite well that they are behaving ridiculously, they live for years afterwards in dread of some calamity, or in hope of some success that has been foretold. There are people whose mental balance is almost overturned because of the brooding obsession of fear which such a palmist's prediction caused.

Alongside of such manifest triviality may be set a great part at least of what is known as " Spiritualism." Of that whole system few people are competent to speak confidently. It must be admitted that men of real ability have been convinced that it is possible to hold converse with the spirits of the dead: and it is maintained that there is nothing whatever in Spiritualism that is opposed to Christianity: on the contrary, its central belief is declared to be a great reinforcement of Christian faith.

This may be true. But three criticisms can hardly be avoided. (1) Spiritualism has been the source of a vast amount of impudent imposture. (2) It has added nothing of value to our acquaintance with the Unseen world. The alleged communications from the departed have been, without any noteworthy exception, inept and uninformative. And (3) its paltry and vulgar exhibitions of rapping and table-turning associate the dead (who should bring us only thoughts of reverent affection) with ideas far enough removed from religion.

The main criticism upon Spiritualism, as upon all dealing with the occult, is that it is dangerous for mind and soul. In this sense it remains " an abomination to the Lord." The complex nervous organism of man can yield strange results. In its subcon-

scious abysses great wonders lie. But the disturbing of that nervous system, the inducing of morbid states is a risky practice, to whose evils every asylum for the insane bears witness. It is not the advocating of any obscurantism : it is not the forbidding of the search for truth in any region : it is not the refusal of welcome to any revelation by any method that the good Lord is pleased to send, when one maintains that, for most people, a dabbling in occult phenomena is only harmful. We can willingly and readily respect all those who investigate obscure and mysterious psychical phenomena, while yet we are convinced that for most it is safest to " ask for the old paths and walk therein."

Our business, however, as followers of Religious Experience is to read the meaning of those aberrations of the human intellect in regions so difficult and obscure.

They testify to the inextinguishable longing of the soul after the spiritual. No one knows what can have led such an earnest seeker after truth as the most eminent apostle of Theosophy to her present attitude of mind ; but there is profound value in this that she has written " Deeply within the heart of all . . . there exists a continual seeking after God. . . . Trampled on for a time, apparently destroyed though the tendency may be, it rises again and again with inextinguishable persistence. . . . Those who hold it to be outgrown find the wildest superstitions succeed its denial. So much is it an integral part of humanity that man will have some answer to his questionings. . . . If he cannot find religious truth, he will take religious error rather than no religion, and will accept the crudest and most incongruous ideals rather than admit that the ideal is

non-existent." One does not need to know much about the Mahatmas of Theosophy in order to be sure that they and their deep speculations about an absorption in the being of God are testifying to the truth of St. Augustine's immortal saying: "Thou, O Lord, hast made us for Thyself, and our souls are restless until they find rest in Thee."

All the magicians and sorcerers and necromancers join in the plaint concerning the limitations of our knowledge that rises from every student of nature and every seeker after the ultimate meaning of things. Charles Darwin was the greatest man of the nineteenth century, perhaps of modern times. And he said, after his epoch-making achievement in the interpretation of nature, "All our knowledge of this planet is something like a hen's knowledge of a forty-acre field, in one corner of which she happens to be scratching." It is horrible to think that such a mean estimate of our knowledge is true. Every thinker would fain defy his limitations, and reach somehow—by unlawful roads if it be needful—to some larger knowledge and power. Such a longing is not altogether in vain. The magicians may, for the most part, have been impostors; their hope of influencing the quiet and holy course of law by incantations and charms may have been puerile; but at the back of their speculations there was "something" that was true. There was that eternal truth which our Lord expressed so solemnly: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes."

There are secrets of Nature and Providence that are not to be worked for, but only to be waited for. Erudition is no security that a new and unfamiliar idea

will reach a learned man as quickly as it reaches the plain unprejudiced open mind that yields itself to be impressed.

It may well be, also, that some have gained and are gaining a knowledge of nature and a command over nature which the methods of science will not secure.

It is certain, again, that the spiritual world yields up contributions both of knowledge and moral force to the devout and receptive spirit which will for ever be alien to minds more intellectually vigorous and far more elaborately equipped. This truth that "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy," that our little systems embrace but a fraction of the knowable, and that treasure may be won in strange ways out of the dark is the immortal teaching that Deuteronomy's nine types of magic-workers with all their grim and evil superstitions displayed. Every vagary of religious and philosophical belief to-day has some element of truth in its content to keep it sweet: but, above all, it is a testimony to the vastness of truth itself and to the hopefulness of the human spirit that truth can somehow be mastered and made our own.

The large spirit of the Deuteronomist recognised that the dim gropers after truth, whom he called—and called rightly—"an abomination unto the Lord," were yet in their own way an assertion that God would meet His peoples' need with an unfolding progressive revelation of Himself. The condemnation of spurious methods, and deceitful and unholy mystifications, was directly connected with the promise: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto Me: unto him ye shall hearken." The majestic truth at

the back of that promise is unaffected. Then, as now, it is not an answer to magician and sorcerer and necromancer and the like to say, "All truth has already been revealed: you are going beyond what is written: you are unholy disturbers of settled things." That is the answer which timorous Christians give now—as a timorous Jew might have given it of old. But the glorious reply of the Old Testament is: I know that there is more of God and His ways to learn. He is to lead His people through a lengthening avenue of revelation: prophet after prophet is to make clear the mind of God, in ever fuller manifestation of the Highest. Even when the "Express Image of His person" is seen, the Spirit of Truth will not have forsaken His progressive mission. He will lead people still into further truth. And the prophet is to be like unto Moses; that is, he is to be the evangelist of Law, with a moral and a spiritual message—a Redeemer, a Ruler, a Renovator, no magic-worker but the Saviour of the Soul.

The great English economist, John Stuart Mill, had an eye quick enough to see what this promise meant for Israel. "Religion was not there," he wrote, "what it has been in so many other places, a consecration of all that was once established, and a barrier against further improvement." It was a proud thing for such a man to have seen what the Prophets meant: it has been the shame of the Christian Church that it has so often been blind to it. Our answer to Theosophy, Spiritualism, and all the occult beliefs is—or at least ought to be—no mere dumb refusal to contemplate any new truth of God, no harsh reassertion of the letter of a closed record, no disdainful refusal to move beyond the barriers of a fiercely guarded creed. If we have learned the spirit which God Himself implanted in His

prophets—that unique spirit of ancient religion which saw itself not as a conservative fast-bound deposit of revelation, but as an ever progressive religion—it will be ours to say, We listen for every voice of God: we strain our ears to catch every new word He has to speak; but we know just as surely that no word will be His word if it be not a moral and intellectual message: if the Prophet who declares it is a mere thaumaturge or magician.

Over against the vindication of the value of the mystical approach to religion a protest must be made against any detraction from the permanent place of Reason.

REASON. — Reason is a suspected faculty in the Christian Church. To be a "Rationalist" has come to mean to be an opponent of Christianity.

Reason is sometimes discredited in the supposed interests of Revelation. God has spoken to us, and it is not for us to question what He has said. But though it is true that there is much in the Bible that could never have been discovered by Reason, the Bible must be interpreted by Reason; nothing in it can be accepted that is contradicted by Reason; and there is no other faculty than Reason itself that can decide which among many professing revelations is to be believed. The Bible itself has given us warrant to "try the spirits whether they be of God."

Reason has sometimes been discredited in the supposed interests of authority. The Church and not our fallible judgement has been set up as the standard of truth. Some teachers, like Cardinal Newman, have a deep distrust of the human reason; and that attitude has, on the whole, been taken by the Roman

Catholic Church. It is an unwarrantable attitude. Authority, of course, ought to be given its place. It is not with a light heart that any man can find himself at variance with beliefs which have obtained the assent of generations of able men, and by which multitudes of saintly lives have been nourished. And little else than derision is deserved by the young man who comes home from his first session at College with new and wild opinions with which to shock his mother and his sisters. But, important as is the authority of the Church, the Church has often been mistaken in the past, and may be mistaken again. Her authority, such as it is, rests upon a reasoned judgement concerning the value of widespread, persistent, and ancient opinions. In the last resort no belief that is accepted merely on authority can be described as our own belief at all. It does not become our own until Reason has dealt with it and fused it in the alembic of our mind.

Reason has sometimes been discredited in favour of mysticism. It has been supposed that a direct communion with God can be established with which the intelligence has nothing to do. Strip from you everything that clothes the mind—so the Mystic requires—strip off your natural affections, the ambitions that occupy you, the thoughts that disturb you, and then with your naked soul, you may see God. That simply is not true. There is a mysticism to which the highest value belongs, the mysticism that realises religious truth somewhat in the same way as we realise the beauty of nature, or art, or poetry. With that this lecture has dealt. But that is not the abnegation of Reason; that is its highest exercise. The mysticism that would discard Reason leaves only an empty mind with which neither God not man can have

dealings. Much of mystical meditation is mere vacuity and mental indolence, the effort to get to the top of a ladder without taking the trouble to climb the steps. There is no knowledge in the world—and least of all the knowledge of God—that can be gained by such lazy methods. Instinct and blind gropings are for children, for undeveloped humanity. The approach to God is Reason's noblest task.

Reason has sometimes been discredited in favour of mere feeling. Religion, we have been told, is a matter not of the head but of the heart. The amount of our knowledge is of little importance if only our heart be full of love. There is a precious truth behind this contention, never to be ignored. But how can I love any one if I do not know him ? What worth is there in an affection that is expended on a cloud ? It may well be that in our reverence and esteem for a man whom we have known, we have had a sense that there were elements in him that transcended our understanding, and the man we loved was greater than we knew. But we could not have loved him at all, if we had not in some measure understood him, and were conscious of powers in him similar to our own. So, in regard to God, the utterly Unknown can evoke no feeling except a blank dismay. We must know something concerning God if we are to love Him. Far as the heavens from the earth He towers beyond our full comprehension, but it is according to the measure of our apprehension of Him that we can have any feeling towards Him that is worth calling religious. It is as impossible to worship an unknown God as it would be to worship a God altogether known. Whatever be the sentimental and emotional states aroused by the sonorous cadencies of an old liturgy, and the

lights burning fair on the far-off altar of a cathedral, and the reverberating organ music swelling down the aisles, these feelings have no religious worth unless they rest in the last resort on Reason. "Ye worship ye know not what," said our Saviour to the woman of Samaria. "We know what we worship."

It is strange that Christian men should have sought in so many ways to discredit reason, when our Lord, and indeed the whole Bible, challenges reason and invites inquiry. "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord," are the words of Isaiah. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," said Hosea. A valuable part of the Old Testament is taken up by the exaltation of wise men, and is known as the "Wisdom Literature." Our Lord Jesus bade us "seek" and promised that we should "find." As a child He listened to the Temple doctors, and asked them questions, and thus He "increased in wisdom and in stature," until He could say, "I am the Truth"; "I am the Light of the World." "Prove all things," said St. Paul. "Be ready to give a reason to every man for the faith that is in you," counselled St. Peter. That is the characteristic Christian attitude. And it is the historical attitude of the Christian Church in its best days.

The earliest apologists were not afraid to vindicate their faith at the bar of Reason. Some of the fathers, notably St. Augustine, would have left an imperishable renown as philosophers were they not specially remembered as Christian divines. And the schoolmen, the Christian thinkers of the Middle Ages, were as emphatic as the fathers in their eulogy and use of reason. "The reasonableness of Christianity" was an idea especially congenial to the great English

theologians of the past. Butler and Paley can be described as "Rationalists" just as fairly, and far more deservedly, than their opponents. And in Scotland, if we have done any service at all to the common cause, it has been by the upholding of the place of reason in religion. There is a great passage in an appeal by the oldest and greatest Baird lecturer, Professor Flint: "The truth is never to be feared but always to be sought after: it never can be in the interests of truth that any one truth should be avoided or neglected or denied." Our people have been trained in that belief. It may be that the sermons of a past age were too long and were often dull. But at least they were a discipline of reason; and the men and women who listened to them, and were shrewd critics of them, got an iron into their blood that no amount of ritualistic mummery would ever have instilled. The Scottish character grew to be what it was because our fathers appreciated rightly the place that reason should occupy in a strong man's faith.

Nobody knows what is coming to the religious life of the country in the next few years. But it is not difficult to prophesy that the only permanent and valuable contribution we can make to the future of our country's religion will be attained by intelligent methods, and not by the revival of superstitions, or the exaggeration of either æsthetic ritual or merely practical and benevolent agencies. A right religion is a complete religion, taking account of man in his totality, and, above all, giving the highest place to that which is highest in man—that Reason whose seat Hooker declared "is the bosom of God and whose voice is the harmony of the world."

This having been said, it is with cautions that any

study of the place of Reason in religion must necessarily end. The life of intellectual self-sufficiency is a gravely one-sided and ineffectual life. Plato declared that those countries are happy where "either philosophers are made kings or kings turn philosophers." But Emerson was surely right when he commented on this advocacy of the rule of intellectuals: "This is so far from being true that, if we consult all historians for an account of past ages, we shall find no princes more weak, nor any people more slavish and wretched, than were the administrations of affairs which fell on the shoulders of some learned bookish governor." A cold and unimaginative intellect may fail where courage and sympathy and a knowledge of the human heart are necessary for statesmanship.

Mere intellect may be hard, self-conceited, prejudiced; and a man of superb reasoning faculty may live in an unreal world and be as ineffectual as a child in the practical affairs of life. A specialised study (in order to be adequate all study must be specialised) is apt to narrow the mind and atrophy faculties that are as necessary as reason for complete self-development.

Most serious of all is the risk that in pursuit of knowledge a man may forget the real end of life—what God sent him here to be and to do. The verdict to be striven for is not "well guessed" but "well done." If, as the harvest of his life, a man can only bring forward much information gained, and many subtle speculations formed, he has failed in the supreme task. The supreme task is the formation in himself of a Christian character, and the rendering to his brethren of Christian service. Only love can minister to that glorious consummation. After all

our admiration of the triumphs of Reason, we must listen to St. Paul's "Praise of Love": "Though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge . . . and have not charity I am nothing." "We know in part," said St. Paul in his glorious dithyrambic eloquence, "and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come then that which is in part shall be done away."

How poor the proudest triumph of intellect in face of the Infinite! Reason pales before goodness when we judge it in the light of death and the eternal years. "Alas for those," says the Divine Speaker in *The Imitation of Christ*, "who busy themselves with men about many curious enquiries, but care little about the way of serving Me."

"The time will come when the Master of masters will appear, Christ, the Lord of angels, to hear the lessons of all; that is to examine each man's conscience. And then shall He search Jerusalem with candles, and the hidden things of darkness shall be made manifest, and the strife of tongues shall be still."

"There will come one hour," He proceeds, "when all tumult and all toil will cease."

"Do therefore that thou doest. Labour faithfully in My vineyard. I will be thy reward.

"Write, read, sing, mourn, keep silence, pray: bear like a man all that is against thee.

"There is that which is worth all these and greater conflicts—everlasting life."

Something must be added about

The Place of Imagination in Religion

Imagination.—Imagination is the image-making faculty of the mind, and by its creative hand the

mind is furnished with innumerable pictures, just as the walls of a room are covered with paintings or engravings.

It is very evident that we cannot speak of this faculty with unqualified praise. It is rather like one of those armies of mercenaries which existed in the Middle Ages—ready to fight on either side of a cause, the right or the wrong. Imagination can be a powerful auxiliary of wickedness. If one seeks the word "imagination" in a concordance of the Bible, one will hardly find it referred to except as an ally of evil. The height of human praise was reached when the Blessed Virgin sang "Magnificat" and rejoiced that God had "scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts."

No one can know anything of human nature without realising the dangers that beset an untrammelled and unsanctified imagination. A man is demure enough to look at, and conventional in his conduct as the strictest Scotsman; but what is he thinking about when he is alone? That is the test of a man. Outward correctness and decorum matter less if the man's imagination runs on what is selfish or vain or foul.

It is this knowledge of the perils of imagination which has led many good people to a condemnation of all works of fiction. Works of fiction are fatal, they think, to application; they divert attention from plain duties; they exhaust the emotions over imaginary characters so that no sympathy is left for real distress. A girl in a shop or factory is made to dwell in a world of countesses and silks and ropes of pearls, and she learns to despise her drudgery.

Some part of this charge against novel-reading is just. Probably most people read too many novels

and too little solid literature. But no one will persuade us that the charge is wholly just. The imaginative presentment of life is sometimes the happiest solace of a weary hour. When fiction is written with the wholesome mind and the tender hand of the great Sir Walter Scott, it can excite the loftiest ambitions ; it can calm and enliven ; it can touch to pity or rouse to enthusiasm or soften to love. Grey lives would be greyer than they are if they had no resort to romance, and could not lift themselves on the wings of imagination beyond the sordid surroundings of the hour. When one thinks of the immortal and splendid pictures with which Sir Walter has adorned our literature, one hesitates to give agreement to people who speak of the dangers of imagination.

The faculty must surely be precious which our Lord Jesus Christ possessed in such a high degree, and of which He made such constant use. The whole world seemed to present itself to our Lord in dramatic and pictorial guise. Familiar scenes of the countryside colour His life and teaching ; and we only need to remember His parables to realise the extent to which He relied on imagination to bear His message to the hearts of men. Take only one incident—the blasting of the barren fig tree, sometimes fancied by pedantic dullards to be a blot on our Saviour's character —what lesson could have been more vivid, more memorable, more likely to search the conscience, regarding the uselessness and the wickedness of pretentious piety ? Thus did imagination serve to bear the loftiest teaching that ever mortals knew.

The whole Bible is full of imaginative writing which can only be interpreted by the same faculty which inspired it. Much of the Bible is history ; and no one

can understand history who does not try to reconstitute in fancy the scenes of the past and behold its characters as they lived and moved and had their being. Much of the Bible is poetry, and a literalist makes nothing of it. Job is not the record of prosaic facts, but one of the noblest examples of dramatic art. Those who try to discover plain references to the Pope or Napoleon or the German Emperor in Daniel or Revelation betray their lack of the first elements of an understanding of literature.

Further than this we can rightly go, and say that it is only by the use of our imagination that we can approach even the central doctrines of our faith. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above," —so we are ordered in the Second Commandment; and it is our duty to obey. But we cannot obey the commandment fully and literally. For it is only by means of images that we can know anything of God at all. We call Him a King; what is kingship but an image? We speak of Him as "high and lifted up" and having His abode in heaven; and we know that at the best these are only poor pictures of reality. Even His holiest name, "Our Father," is but an image too. It cannot be denied that in a sense we are all idolaters—image worshippers—because we cannot help it. It is only by the imagination—by the image-making faculty—that we can body forth any conception of the Unseen. The baldest definition that the logic-mongers frame is couched in language that reeks of metaphor and fancy.

Just as certainly is it true that if we are to meet aright the claims of religious duty we must give imagination its free course. Every one remembers

Thomas Hood's lines, "Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as want of heart." By "want of thought" he meant want of imagination. We do not visualise before our minds our brethren's needs. The result is that we neglect them, and fail in justice or charity towards them. To see other men and women as they are and to put ourselves in their place is a divinely appointed training in benevolence. And we can only put ourselves in the place of others by the exercise of imagination. It is often a difficult task.

An English moralist once said that no man could sit at the banquet of life unless he sat blindfold. He meant that no man could eat his own dinner in peace if he had imagination enough to realise the sorrow and sufferings of his fellows. The Golden Rule is, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them." But we cannot obey the Golden Rule without putting ourselves in the place of others, and imagining what we should want from them of benevolence and justice. First the dream—pray God that we dream it loftily and nobly—then the effort; and then the glorious consummation when the old hatreds and strifes are banished and God's will is fully done.

Just as certainly MEMORY has its definite place in religious experience.

MEMORY.—Perhaps the religious value of Memory is best discovered when we regard it in the light of duty, in the light of happiness, and in the light of immortality.

Seen in the light of duty, Memory is manifested not merely as a gift more or less valuable which some-

how we possess, but as a faculty for which we are responsible, and which it is our task to train. And this for three reasons :

(*a*) We must ever regard it as the duty of the earlier years of life to prepare the scenery and surroundings amid which the mind will live when the winter of old age has fallen. One has known old men and women who had stored their memories with psalms and paraphrases and long passages of fine poetry, and it was their constant delight to dwell amid these possessions—the precious inheritance from their youth. It is such an experience that makes it necessary to protest against a very common delusion of modern times, that nobody should learn what he does not at the moment understand. Influenced by this delusion, people discourage the practice of memorising and "getting things," as we say, "by heart." But understanding will improve with age, while the faculty of rote-memory will not. The boy or girl who has not stored the mind with the world's great literature, and above all with the solemnising and uplifting language of Scripture, will miss in later years a surrounding scenery for the mind without which the mind will be lonely and cold.

(*b*) It is equally clear that the training of memory is needful, if we are to be fully true to the claims of affection. "I forgot" is a common excuse to cover a neglect of kindness. But often enough a short memory is only a sign of a cold heart. If we had cared enough we should not have forgotten. Love quickens the attention and disciplines the interest on which memory is founded. If we were true to our affections we should be stronger in memory also.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not.

Those who have had an experience of such neglect and ingratitude would not be slow to declare that the training of memory is one of the solemnest duties of life.

(c) Finally, under this aspect of the theme, the providence of God over our life must be constantly recalled if we are to see ourselves as we should, and to worship Him as His love and goodness demand. A certain Persian vizier had a room in his palace that he called the "Chamber of Memory." It was filled with the shabby furniture and the ragged clothes of his youth, ere his advancement to rank and fortune came; and the vizier spent an hour every day in that room in order to rebuke his pride and remind himself of the road by which he had risen. It would be good for us if we kept such a chamber of memory in our hearts. What thoughts of penitence and gratitude, and what a sense of God's guidance over the course of our life it would constantly inspire! To cultivate that memory of God's goodness until it so grips and holds us that all complaining is impossible, and all doubt seems the basest ingratitude, is one of the loftiest tasks of Christian men.

Seen in the light of happiness, Memory is the source alike of the purest pleasures and of the most inexorable torment that human creatures know.

It is the source of the purest pleasure; for Memory is the one Paradise out of which man cannot be driven.

How often one has said to bereaved husband or wife : " At least nothing can rob you of the knowledge that you possessed that love and confidence all these years." Tennyson says that " sorrow's crown of sorrows is remembering happier things." But that is not true. Rather does sorrow find a refuge in recalling, in as vivid pictures as it can, the dear faces and happy incidents of the past ; and " the tender grace of a day that is dead " becomes even more beautiful because it is seen through a haze of memory down the tear-stained avenue of the years.

If Memory have this gracious contribution to happiness, it can also torture and scorch the soul. " If I only could get rid of bygones," a man says. But he cannot get rid of bygones. The Greeks had a fable that a river ran by the shore of the nether world whose waters brought forgetfulness. But the fable about Lethe was too good to be true. Some philosophers think that everything that once has been in consciousness remains for ever stored in memory. A part of our life seemed over and done with ; we have not thought about it for years. But some association unlocks the chamber of memory where it was stored ; and there it is, as vividly clear as when it was sensation, hot and new ! Whether or not everything committed to remembrance can, some day, somehow, be recalled, at least there is enough in every memory of sorrow and remorse to make it evident that—seen in the light of happiness—Memory is the most important as well as the most mysterious of all the faculties of man.

Seen in the light of immortality, Memory assumes a form yet more august. " Son, remember," said the aged saint to Dives in the place of torment ; and the

word was at once the assurance of the man's continued personal existence, and the suggestion of the chief element of his deserved and poignant misery.

Memory is the first essential to a belief in immortality, in a continued personal existence. That "corporate immortality," of which George Eliot's lines about the "choir invisible" are the best-known illustration, is not an immortality at all. Unless a man have a grip upon the past, and know himself as the same man that lived and loved and suffered and then died, it is useless to speak of a life after death.

If memory thus survive — or, as men nearly drowned have testified, and as the Bible seems to suggest, if the very fact of death be itself a marvellous stimulant and intensifier of memory—is it not evident that much of the meaning of the reward and the punishment of a future life must be interpreted in terms which Memory supplies? Forgiveness itself is not oblivion, and the saved soul in all its blessedness cannot find the balm of healing that forgetfulness would bring. That old sin stained the dead man's life and covered it with regret and remorse and pain. He confessed it before his Father in Heaven, and the sin was forgiven. There is nothing more certain in the Gospel of Christ than this. Forgiven was the old sin: but forgotten? that is another matter, and that cannot be. Even amid the angel presences of the fair land to which the man has gone, the ghosts of his buried life will rise to haunt him, and in the burden of an unquenchable memory he will know at times something of that other state where Dives was when he heard the voice of Abraham, "Son, remember."

There are alleviations to such a thought that in some degree mitigate its terror. Memory will adjust itself

in the presence of a fuller knowledge than is possible here of the consequences of actions and the power of God to turn the wrath of man to praise Him. Memory will be lightened by a hope surer than now can be discovered, and a faith firmer than that on which we stumbling mortals lean. In the conscious presence of Love itself, even Memory will yield to adoration and praise.

IV

THE CRISES OF THE SOUL

It is right to begin a study of the crises of the soul with thoughts about the sadder aspects of life; and we think at first about the loss of innocence, illustrating it by the ancient story of the Fall.

The Fall.—It is not uncommon to state a case against our religion thus: Belief in Redemption rests upon a belief in the Fall of Man: and belief in the Fall rests upon the third chapter of Genesis. Criticism has disproved the historical value of the third chapter of Genesis. Therefore, with it we must abandon the great characteristic doctrines of the Christian faith.

To this contention we should answer (1) that it is not certain that science has disproved the story of Eden; and (2) that, even if it had, a belief in the Fall is rested on other and surer grounds than history.

In order that any statement should either be proved or disproved it is necessary that it should be understood. And it is not always understood that there is no warrant in Scripture for the idyllic picture of the first man, Adam, which Milton gave in *Paradise Lost*. The first man, indeed, is represented as innocent; but that was only because he was ignorant and untried. There is no suggestion of any development of his mind or character. A naked creature, living on

fruits, and apparently without a roof to cover him, unacquainted yet with the use of the metals, with no knowledge of music or the arts, the first man in Genesis is as different as may be from a high type of intellectual and moral beauty, and it is not a great strain of the narrative to place him where the men of science would discover his true position—as only a little developed beyond the animal world around him.

Yet (though this is true) it is not by such an avenue that a proper understanding of the third chapter of Genesis is found. It is difficult to suppose that there was ever a time when spiritual minds did not reach below its surface to its tragic and universal truth. There are, of course, many ignorant and superstitious persons who fancy that the chapter was written to tell about serpents that walked on their tails and talked. But one thinks more highly of the race than to believe that, even in the earliest days, there were none who saw in the story other and worthier things. Take but one sentence from it: "Their eyes were opened." Were there ever men or women who read those words without some startled recollection of a day in their own life when things took a different look before and after some deed was done? Those who read the story of the Fall in the light of their own hearts must have always known that in its essentials the story is true; and they cared as little as we need care now how much of literal and bald occurrence was mingled with the tale.

It is wonderful how slow people are, even in this century, to believe that God can reveal His truth through any other medium than the facts of history. The lesson of the Good Samaritan would lose its meaning for such people if they could believe that our Lord

only imagined the Good Samaritan, and could not have told his height and his weight and his age. In Job there would no longer be for such persons the sublimest vindication of God's justice, if they could bring themselves to think that there was not any man of the name of Job dwelling in the land of Uz. And for them the pathos of repentance and forgiveness would be gone from the Book of Jonah were the admission made that certain weird occurrences recorded there are too fantastic to be thought the record of what actually, in sober prose statement, is to be believed. It is such a literalism that hinders people from reaching the heart of the story of the Fall. We know that God reveals His truth through poetry and drama, through idyll and tale and legend and allegory, just as much as through history. Before any one strikes an unkindly blow at the third chapter of Genesis let that at least be understood.

A belief in the Fall of Man is not rested exclusively upon that, or any, narrative. It rests also upon the testimony of consciousness and of all human experience and literature. In our own consciousness we feel that we are not what we ought to be, and what we were destined to be. The existence of two selves in a man —a better self, which takes pleasure in the good, and a bad self, which makes for the bad, is a fact too plain to be denied.

Just as plain is the fact that, like Adam of old, we are ashamed at the sight of our own failure. The highest of creatures is the one which is ashamed that it is not higher still. The degenerate plant, the weed or the wild-flower, knows no pang as it stands beside the gorgeous beauty of the garden and sees what it might have been. An animal tamed and domesticated has

no reminiscence of a nobler self while it looks at the wild creature of its breed, fierce and strong and free. But sure as any fact of the world is this, that man, having tasted of the Tree of Knowledge, sees between him and the Tree of Life the angel with a flaming sword which turns on all sides and bars his way. He is conscious that he has fallen beneath himself, and bears the haunting memory of it as the condition of sin and misery into which he was brought by the Fall.

We do not speak now in the same terms as they spoke in the seventeenth century in the Shorter Catechism. The vocabulary of religious experience is different. But, whatever be the words that own it, man knows and mourns his Fall. All religions have in some way expressed it. The sense of sin is at their root. The nobler of them have felt it the most keenly: and all the noblest outside of Christ's influence have been unspeakably sad because they knew so much of sin and nothing of forgiveness.

It is the sense of sin that lends its seriousness to the Greek drama. The great literature of the world is full of it. And now, when perhaps the work of fiction is the aptest representation of the mind of the time, one needs to know but little of the books which are profoundest and have moved men most to see that Sin is their problem, their mystery, their tragic and unalleviated pain. There is no sorrow that has saddened men so deeply as that of *Paradise Lost*, and the gates of Eden closed.

In some ways the thought of the Fall of Man presents itself to the modern mind as a formative and influential thought.

We are deeply impressed with the organic view of mankind. The notion of an isolated individualism

cannot be cherished any more. Such words as "solidarity" have entered deeply into our thinking. When St. Paul said, "As in Adam all died," he defined for us what seems one of the most central truths of life. All humanity has become for us one great organism in which the individual life is but a cell, contributing its share to the whole but itself finding from the whole its life and texture and meaning. Or, to put it more pictorially, all humanity is one broad stream of life; it is dyed dark with sin; and, like the defilement from mills in a river, the dye has spread to every drop. Each separate soul has its share of the common badness — the old immemorial "original" sin. People mocked at such a doctrine once. The very phraseology seemed the utterance of an artificial day. But now they own with unanimous voice—awed with its solemn meaning—that no child is born perfectly good, that each, along with its inheritance of good, has also been the heir of tendencies going back over ages, which, when the will works on them, may result in evil living. Once they said that the sin of Adam could do no harm to a modern man. But now they speak with bated breath of the sorrowful heritage of the Fall.

The thought of this old degeneracy of mankind destroyed the cheap optimism of Rousseau and his school. Their shallow speech about the inherent goodness of mankind is heard no more. In the eighteenth century, when such views prevailed, the millennium was to be won by education, and the world's sores were to be mended by the sprinkled perfume of refinement. A deeper sense of the power of evil has fastened upon thoughtful men. A career of wrong that has lasted through ten thousand years must have left marks deeper than such cheap methods will rub away.

Behind errors of taste and faults of judgement and the mere riot of a careless and undisciplined mood lies the old sombre tragic fact of Sin. Just as men see life clearly, they are oppressed with the consequences of the Fall.

If it be asked what effects on character should be wrought by this great dominating conception of the degeneracy and alienation of our race, it should be answered that two results should be wrought.

First, it should add a certain gravity and moral strain to life without which it will miss its highest note. Walt Whitman, the American poet, spoke envyingly of the beast creatures which do not lie awake at night and bewail their sins : and doubtless there is something enviable in the callous, untroubled, animal mind. Greater thinkers than he—the men, for example, who made the literature of Greece illustrious —have called to some such sunny self-expression, and myriads have heard the call. But the highest life cannot exist, nor even a completely cultured life, if it ignores and passes by the problems that make the world a place of pain. There is, however, a consoling reflection. Fallen man is in a sense a loftier man than the primeval Adam, just because this element of sorrow and struggle has taken the place of an innocence which was only ignorance, and of a happiness which had no root in the conquest of self and sin.

This also must be the conviction of any one who faces the fact of old universal and hereditary sin. Strong is sin ; but God is stronger. One man's transgression makes its melancholy march through the ages, blighting, cursing, defiling what it touches. Even a little sin, as we think it, will have consequences in time and eternity the very thought of which must

appal. And what are the effects of some great sin—let us say the effects of some evil book that is a work of genius? What a havoc of affection, imagination, hope lies corrupting in its way. Such have been, and are, the fruits of the Fall of Man. But whether is evil or God the stronger? We only need to state the question to have it answered, and to turn again to hope. In the Book of the Revelation it is written "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have a right to the Tree of Life and may enter in through the gates into the city." Thus are we bidden to look for a Paradise Regained. It is the two ends of the human race we regard. Long ages lie between. But just as we see man first with the soft light of the sunrise on him, and he was innocent then in the world's dawn, we see him as the day closes, and the mellow glow of the sunset gathers round him. Against its red glory he stands, a far more majestic figure—not innocent indeed, for that cannot be again, but godly, wise, and strong. The plan of life is no mystery now. His footsteps are steadied with experience, and he will not fall again. And death is past. It is not poetry only, it is a sure faith, which makes us see in redeemed humanity, as it follows the Lamb over the sea of glass, something nobler than primeval Adam was in his days of ignorance and innocence.

One deals next with FORGIVENESS.

FORGIVENESS.—It is always good to get at the root of things. And it is especially good when one is concerned with great world-moving truths which are often accepted as mere commonplace. When we turn to the problem of forgiveness of sins, it is well to face some

elementary and fundamental questions. 1st, Do we really want to be forgiven? 2nd, If we do, can God forgive us? And 3rd, If God forgives, what difference will it make to us and to what we have done?

The first question is: Do we really want to be forgiven? One knows that a great Christian like Luther found the cry for forgiveness to be the profoundest call of the soul's need: and he wrote the well-known hymn, beginning:

> From depths of woe I raise to Thee
> The voice of lamentation.

But others speak like Sir Oliver Lodge: "The higher man of to-day is not worrying about sin." There are many like Lodge who cannot realise the sense of sin and unworthiness. There are not a few who feel about the Book of Psalms as a book of devotion that much of its language is unreal and exaggerated. They criticise in the same way much of the language of prayer which they hear in church, and much of the language of good men and women of whom they read in religious biographies. They do not forget their own sins, but they think of them as like their sicknesses; a healthy reaction of the nature threw them off, and they do not trouble about them any more. Especially do young people feel and speak like this. They have not realised (as they will realise later; and not least, when they are complimented by their friends) what a muddle they have made of life, and they resent being asked to confess that they are "miserable sinners."

Light-mindedness and boisterous health are often at the root of this attitude towards forgiveness. But it is not a healthy attitude. That never can be a good frame of mind which is rested on radical untruth.

That men are sinful and needing forgiveness is written large over the history of the race. The sacrifices that smoke on the altars of all religions testify to it. The tragedy that lends terror to every literature is its mournful proof. A man may be blind to the need of forgiveness for long. But one day he awakens to the reality of things ; and then we read of such torment as tore the soul of Augustine or of Bunyan ; or a whole community is struck with the conviction of sin, and then we hear of great revivals of religion, and of the conversions and sudden changes in the attitude to life which an awakened conscience stirs. It is the best men who have most keenly realised their need of forgiveness. It was on the lips of holy men like St. John or pious women like St. Teresa that the expression of unworthiness was most intense. For there will always be religious geniuses, as there are geniuses in art and literature. But all mankind stands in essentially the same relation to the law of right. Conscience, keen or dull, is a universal possession. One does not need to labour more an answer to the first question : Do we really want to be forgiven ? If we do not feel the want, we ought to ; for we also are men and women kindred of the sinful race.

The second question, Can God forgive sin ? is harder to answer, for it is mixed up with so many confused ideas, both about forgiveness and about God. People fancy that to be forgiven is to escape from the penalty of wrongdoing. They know from experience that such an escape is impossible. It cannot be ; and the penitent who sues for forgiveness has no wish that it should be. There is a " punishment principle " deep in our nature, and the man who has done wrong does not want to be defrauded of the wholesome pain his

sin has earned. Never was mistake greater than that of those who declaim against a belief in Hell-fire in this world or the next, fancying that the universe is ruled by the surface sentimentality of kindly but thoughtless souls. The truth is that a wrongdoer wishes to feel the fire, and would shirk none of the consequences of his wrongdoing till the ends of discipline be satisfied. The penalty may be borne in patience, while the heart is singing with the joy of the redeemed. The persistence of some measure of punishment is no hindrance to a belief that God can forgive sin.

The great hindrance is in that view of God which many think essentially modern and "scientific," but which is as old as any half-truth and heresy in the world—the view of God as persistent law. There is no use of asking forgiveness from a law of nature. But we did not need to live till the twentieth century to find out that. It is stated with startling eloquence in the first chapter of the Book of Proverbs. There Wisdom, which is just the working of justice along the lines of natural law, is made to say to an offender: "I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; then shall they seek me early, but they shall not find me." "I told you so" is all the comfort that such Wisdom can give when the day of retribution falls. We need not hide from ourselves that there is such a side to the divine righteousness with which we have to do. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is the awful denunciation of God's law. But it is only one side of it; and it is a terrible impiety to identify God in Christ with that Wisdom of the Proverbs. He is Wisdom; but He is also Love. At the back of all arguments about God's

orderly working, and His certain penalties, lies the fact that the law and its consequences are His, and that He is our Father in Heaven.

At the last resort Forgiveness only means that God, who had been away from our conscious fellowship, has come back. "Not He from us but we from Him" had been severed by our sins, and the friendship that had been broken is once again renewed.

The prime doctrine of Christian faith is the Fatherhood of God. When that is held realisingly there can be but one answer to the question, Can God forgive sin?

The main difficulty is still to be met: What difference will His Forgiveness make to us, and to what we have done?

The classical reference in all thought about Forgiveness is to the parable of the Prodigal Son. One is often tempted to wish that the story had led us a little farther. It used to be the fault of the old romances that they pursued the adventures of their heroes and heroines only until they were safely wedded, leaving all the difficulties and dangers of later life outside their interest, as if romance were henceforth finished. So one has sometimes been inclined to join in the desire of an old Puritan divine when he discussed the Prodigal Son and wished that we had been told something more about the after-history of that young man. All was not over when the feast was made, and the robe was set on the penitent's shoulders, and the ring put on his hand. What of the days of reaction after the joy of the Father's forgiveness? What of those times, which must have come, when the roving mood grew strong in the man again, and he saw in the far country not the swine troughs only but the old companions of

his gaiety, and the taste of life was hot in his mouth once more? How did he meet those temptations? And what did Forgiveness do to save him from the moral deterioration that the wandering years had caused? Many a bad association must have lingered in his mind. The very words of worship, as he heard them used at family prayer, would call up blasphemies. Every innocent phrase of current talk would have some horrid double-meaning for him; and imagination would often take to itself wings and run riot in low-life scenes. If there is anything in our knowledge of human nature, all this must have been true. What, then, did Forgiveness purchase for the man? It did not win forgetfulness. Many a ghost of his buried life must have risen to haunt him, and many a remorse to sting. Untroubled happiness could not be his. But the new and wholesome environment would work a healing change. One has seen a stream befouled by pollutions from a factory. It ran grey and ugly past the mill. But a mile down its course the waters had grown pure again. So does the stream of life, when things are right and no new corruption comes, work out its cleansing. Tissues get renewed after the wasting of an illness. The grass is growing green and the grain is golden over the devastated fields of France. God works out His mercy in countless ways, and His forgiveness is not meaningless even when much is irrevocable, and the sorrow and the consequences of evil still remain.

It is on the side of the consequences of sin that the problem of Forgiveness meets its hardest difficulty. Why talk of Forgiveness? men say; What right has the man to be forgiven, when the evil he has done lives after him, and his course is strewn with lives he has

ruined ? Sleek sits the Prodigal at his father's table; but what of the lad he taught to gamble and brought to poverty and crime ? What of the poor girl who trusted him and whom he betrayed ? What of the homes into which he brought a sorrow and a shame, the very thought of which should blister his soul, and startle him from his dinner, and drive him out into the night in despair ? Doubtless such questions are near the heart of things. But Forgiveness is not valueless even in spite of them. If one has learned of God the Father one knows that infinite and almighty Love is in charge of life ; and nothing we have introduced into God's world can be stronger than His own righteous Will which is overruling all. And if we have learned something of the merciful Providence of events we have seen God bringing good out of evil, and making the wrath of man to praise Him. After we have made what reparation we can (and all life is too short for the effort to make reparation), we can trust the past of wrong-doing to God's mercy, even as we trust the future of holy effort. It is striking enough that Jesus should have said nothing about all this in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, as if He also were willing to leave it all to Love.

So far nothing has been said about the place of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Atonement He made in winning the Forgiveness of sins. But that is at the root of everything. Everything proceeds on that. It is from Him that we understand best what the Psalmist said: "There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared." One commentator remarks on that saying of the Psalmist, "it is completely unintelligible." But it is intelligible enough to many a troubled soul, who has made his confession, and sought

Forgiveness, and has risen with a new peace in his soul. It is all wonderful. It stirs to awe. Forgiveness is not an easy thing to believe in. We are bound to notice that Forgiveness is put into the Creed beside the great mysteries as a thing that needs an effort to believe in. We need to profess our faith "in the Forgiveness of sins" as in "the life everlasting." It is not simple to believe in Forgiveness, and the belief is not easily won. Every theory of the Atonement is just an effort to state at what cost to God our pardon was purchased. But though it is not simple nor easily gained, and though it stirs to wonder, Forgiveness brings us strangely nearer God. A poet of the last generation, who never fulfilled his early promise, told of the transformation of life which came to a man as first he learned of the merciful Love of the Father:

> As one that riseth from the tomb,
> I rose and wept in soul distress.
> I had not feared His wrath and gloom,
> But now I feared His loveliness.
> I sought for peace with God: and then
> I went and made my peace with men.

Crises, Unperceived and Perceived

Our next consideration is the approach to the Christian life of the man who knows himself, in the old use of the words, as "fallen" and "forgiven."

Conversion.—After the conversion of St. Paul, that of St. Augustine is perhaps the most memorable in the history of the Christian Church. That great man, torn between the ties of sin and the attractions of the Gospel, threw himself down in an agony

under a tree in his garden. And suddenly he heard a voice bidding him consult the Bible. "Take it and read, take it and read," the voice cried. Returning to his house, Augustine opened the New Testament, and the first words upon which his eye lighted were: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." Augustine wrote in his *Confessions*, "I had neither desire nor need to read farther. Thus hast Thou converted me to Thee."

Such a record of sudden conversion has helped to fasten upon the minds of Christian men the notion that St. Paul and St. Augustine have set for all time and all people the pattern of a normal approach to God. A learned divine said: "The conversion of St. Paul is the typical conversion of the New Testament . . . in it we find the leading characteristics of every true conversion." The movements which are called "Revivals" seem to such teachers the realisation by the Church of her most characteristic duty, and the phenomena of penitence and exaltation which they create seem to be a repetition of the experiences of the first and best Christians when the Church was primitive and pure.

Yet it cannot be denied that the "Revival" has, to some extent, lost its power of reaching the heart. If Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey were alive, and were to come to Scotland to-day, their message would not meet the reception which it got forty-five years ago. "Revivals" seem to us now to have dealt too much with personal salvation, and to have been too much occupied with what a man is saved "from," omitting the yet more serious consideration of what

he is saved "to." That were indeed a callous and ungrateful person who did not own Mr. Moody and his fellow-workers as chosen instruments of God in rendering incalculably valuable service to many lives, yet there remains the fact that the conscience of many refuses to recognise the need of such an emotional experience as was the central object of the "Revival" movement. There are in every community a great number of godly men and women, pure-living and reverent—men and women who do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with God—who are held back from the membership of the Church on account of the notion that some tumultuous revolution, some mystical transformation of their character, is involved.

The whole matter is of such grave importance that the teaching of the New Testament upon it demands the most patient study.

On the forefront of the records is the story of St. Paul. It is true that St. Paul is the only person in the New Testament who was "converted," in the sense in which a "Revival" preacher uses that word. But he was such a notable person that all the phenomena of his conversion demand our thought.

There is a short and easy method of dealing with it which commends itself to some. He was an epileptic, they say, and the whole story is a delusion. Using the jargon of the schools, they speak of "a discharging lesion of the occipital cortex, he being an epileptic." But we have not done with St. Paul when we call him such names. Julius Cæsar, and Plutarch, and Cromwell, and Napoleon, and Peter the Great were epileptics; and they left a mark on the world's thought and life which makes us inclined to take them at their word

when they tell us of the dominating purposes they held and the origin of their beliefs. St. Paul was a man of indomitable force of character and an eminently sane mind, and it is idle to speak of a headache on a hot day as the turning-point of such a career as his. If we ask, "Were the sensations he experienced on the road to Damascus real?" the answer might be given, "What sensation is real?" If we ask, "How did he hear the Lord's voice? How did he see the Lord's face?" again we might be answered, "Is it only with the eyes that one sees? Is it only with the ears that one hears? Do we only speak with the tongue?" In truth, the whole apparatus of outward sensation is irrelevant in such a connection. Those who have known, know. Somehow St. Paul found a direct access to God at a supreme moment of spiritual ecstasy. We have his word for it; and it is enough. We shall never fathom all the meaning of such an experience. Just as the moon has one face turned away from earth, looking into infinity, a face we never see—so is it with the Mystic. In him there is the spiritual face — mysterious, inexplicable, but a face with which we must reckon. This it is which makes it so difficult to interpret properly a man of a constitution like St. Paul. We have to allow for a factor in his composition that escapes investigation. Yet for the attendant circumstances of his sudden conversion we have his own testimony, and the testimony of the succeeding years of his life. That thus a soul may be apprehended of Christ (they are St. Paul's own words) we know from his record, and from the story, not dissimilar, of St. Augustine and many more.

We are not, indeed, precluded from seeking for

some psychological preparation. St. Paul himself gives no hint of such a preparation, or of any wavering in his career of persecution before the moment when the blinding light struck him down. But if he was like the rest of us, the influences of the past were not without their silently moulding power. He may (as some believe) have seen Jesus Himself as He walked through Jerusalem, and he could not have escaped altogether from the atmosphere charged with electrical excitement which surrounded the Lord. It may have been also (as De Quincey suggested) that the face of the murdered Stephen haunted his persecutor's dreams and troubled his waking hours. Surely, also, something of the fortitude and meekness of the men and women he dragged to prison must have touched the heart of St. Paul—never a hard or cruel heart. We know, also, that a certain dissatisfaction with the Jewish law was working already in that fine spiritual nature. It may well be that the very violence of his persecution was the atonement he made to himself for a certain vacillation and doubt—"Could Christianity indeed be true? Could it after all be true?" Such considerations do not detract in great measure from the startling suddenness of the change which was wrought upon him. St. Paul's case stands in the New Testament as the classical illustration of the man who is brought to God through such tumultuous emotion as the modern "Revival" would fain elicit in every case.

Yet, if one turns to the rest of the New Testament, and especially to the teaching of Jesus, there is no suggestion that such a tragedy of conscience is the normal type of religious life. St. Paul himself does not maintain that his own experience needs to be

repeated in every Christian; he distinctly sets emotionalism on a lower level than intelligent apprehension of the truth. And no other of the great men of the Apostolic age seems to have gone by the same road into the Master's presence and service. When the Lord spoke to Matthew the publican and said "Follow me," it was with a simple instinctive obedience that the man arose and followed Him. When Zaccheus had made promise of restitution of his ill-gotten gain, the Lord at once replied to him, "Now is salvation come unto thy house." The Ethiopian listened—not unmoved, we may be sure, yet with quiet thoughtfulness—to St. Philip's exposition of the prophecy regarding Christ, and then was at once baptized. A man like Timothy had a godly upbringing in a pious home, and needed no fierce conflict of the nature ere he yielded his affectionate devotion to the Lord.

The truth is that—as in all human life—God works with different men in different ways. Some souls grow like flowers, and some leap like cataracts. And there are more roses in the world than there are Niagaras. Calm thoughtfulness and the pressure of life's discipline bring more souls to the feet of Christ than the cataclysms and crises and catastrophes.

The wonders are not unreal because they are unusual. But the ordinary ways are best. Let it not be forgotten that when Jesus spoke to Nicodemus of the need of the second birth, and said, "Unless a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," He cannot have been suggesting by that figure the throes of spiritual anguish. If one indeed adheres to the figure, it is not the child who is born that feels the birth-pains —the new life is unconscious of itself for long. The final argument, however, is this: It is Jesus Himself

and not St. Paul who is our example. If all must conform to that type of conversion which marked the approach of St. Paul to God, then there is no room for the type of goodness which Jesus showed. Teachers like Professor James of Harvard who extol the wider outlook and the completer life of those they call the twice-born seem to forget that within that number there is no place for the fairest life of all.

There must be something wrong with a doctrine which excludes from the highest form of religious life a man like Channing, "because of the extraordinary rectitude of his character"—the puzzling paradox needing to be maintained that a soul may be too good to be religious. If we get the whole consensus of the New Testament on the subject, a conclusion worthier and truer is reached. The Vision of Christ, it tells us, is the saving power for all. Reach it how he will, it makes a man nobler, better, when it is gained. What the metaphysician called the "Categorical Imperative," what the Quaker called the "Inner Light," what the Mystic called "God-consciousness," what St. Paul called "Faith," is the direct access of the spirit to the loving Father. Get it as Augustine got it, or Luther got it, or Wesley got it—it is the supreme blessing for the soul. But the grace of God must not be confined to channels which our narrow dogmatisms have fashioned; we must not fancy that the great God speaks to His children only with thunders or earthquakes, or only with still small voices. We only need to be alert to listen to all His revealing words.

If this study of New Testament teaching has reached a sound conclusion, it will follow that conversion is as necessary as ever—for men are not, and never

will be, "safe" until they turn to Christ; but the old word should reach two changes in its meaning.

First, Conversion should be understood more positively—less negatively—than it used to be understood. We should think more of what we are turned "to" than of what we are turned "from." It is a fact that the sense of sinfulness is less a feature of the modern consciousness, and the sense of responsibility is deepening. There are teachers who deplore this. But it is a return to the mind of Christ. Christ said little about "Sin" with a capital S, though He said much about particular sins. The word "sin" occurs forty times in Romans and only once in the Synoptic Gospels. And one cannot get near the mind of the Master without feeling that He did not brood upon the sinfulness of human nature with half the intensity with which St. Paul brooded upon it. His look was forward, not backward; not to forgiveness so much as to the building up of the Kingdom of God.

It is this consideration which is bringing a new and much more blessed meaning into that beautiful name by which Jesus was called, "The Good Physician." A good physician indeed He was in healing the diseases of human souls, and bringing back the debilitated and enfeebled to an enthusiastic and vigorous life. But the modern science of medicine turns with ever-growing hopefulness to that branch of its enterprise which is not merely curative but preventive. It has less belief in boluses and drugs than in fortified constitutions and hygienic surroundings and wholesome life. The Good Physician ministers to men's souls with such a positive preventive Gospel, and the chief task of Conversion, as modern Christians understand it, is not so much the rescue of the soul from sin as the

passing of the soul to circumstances where sin will be more difficult and holiness more easy than before.

Take, for example, the subject of wealth. There was a day when a Christian finished his duty to be done when a certain toll of charity had been exacted from his gains. The modern conscience is not content with that. It goes to the source where wealth is made, and seeks to control, not its expenditure only, but its accumulation. It asks a man not only, "Do you spend your money like a Christian?" but, "How is your money made?" It is too late to convert wealth when shame is over it. wealth should be converted at its source.

A positive Gospel is for ever making usefulness the standard of value. One sometimes hears a man proclaiming the fact of his conversion, and he speaks much of the peace he had found and much of the evil in which he had wallowed, the memory of it being recalled with gusto: and one has compared him in thought with some other with no emotional experience to speak of, yet whose life is spent in unselfish benevolence, and one has not doubted which was the truly "converted" man.

A second duty will be read into Conversion by the modern mind. It is suggested by our Lord's own teaching about the duty of being converted to the mind of little children. The great task of moral and religious education is at the heart of the subject. For one who comes to Christ by the stormy voyage of St. Paul, a hundred are led to Him by the influences of early training and the atmosphere of home, and the wise, kind words of teachers. How is it that so many young men and women are not in the fellowship of the Church and are indifferent to spiritual things?

Is it because these young people are already unbelievers — youthful Bradlaughs and Ingersolls? It is only because they are ignorant; they have not been taught. The subtlest of all teachers, the mother, has somehow failed; the gravest schoolmaster, the father, has brought them some worldly wisdom, but they have not learned in his presence that there is another world than the senses know, a rarer atmosphere than the lungs breathe, a holier place even than home. So they need to wait till the day comes—will it ever come?—when some numbing stroke of circumstance wakes them from the dream of ignorance, and there fall from their eyes, as it were, scales, and they know themselves the inhabitants of two worlds—the seen and the unseen—and by some tragedy of conscience, such as St. Paul passed through, they also have a vision of the Lord. But how much they miss—even as St. Paul, with a tortured spirit, to the last mourned over the years when he persecuted the Lord who died for him. And how much "Conversion" means for the soul that has seen Christ early! It means ordered days, linked each to each with unstruggling, unstained piety: it means a beautiful, honourable life; a clear outlook from the eyes; no haunting memories to make the darkness terror-filled; a happy, hopeful view of man, and a quiet walk with God. And what the end?

> To start thee on thy out-running race
> Christ shows the splendour of His face;
> What will that face of splendour be
> When at the goal He welcomes thee?

In brief, it may be maintained that the ideal of man's relation to God is the place of a child in the home.

God has given the children to be our teachers. And of many a man brought to Christ's feet it is true that a little child has led him. There is a pathetic passage in one of Cardinal Newman's "Miscellanies," in which that old man, cut off by his own act from marriage and home and children, and feeling the spiritual loss of it, gives thanks that the Church had appointed the "Day of the Holy Innocents," with its yearly suggestion of the purity, peace, and contentment which are the characteristics of little children. How much more should those who know of Innocents nearer home than the children who suffered at Herod's hands be grateful for the lessons their presence brings? The child slumbers in every man's heart, however artificial his life may have become, and it is ever responsive to the thought of childhood. Nothing so moves the heart as when our own earliest memories wake. In our best moments we all sometimes travel back in our thoughts. We see the life that the years have purchased drop from us as we go. The hard lines on our faces soften, and the wrinkles grow smooth. The interests, so many of them selfish, in which our minds rest, fall from us: the bitter struggles for unworthy ends, the gross pleasures, the nerve-wearing excitements, the mean ambitions—all cease for the moment to be ours. And the heart is light again with simple pleasures, again a child. We are never so near God as then. Of course, childhood is not perfectly good. Those who take their theology from life as well as from books know that. St. Augustine's doctrine of original sin has a solid truth at its back. Yet the faults of childhood only make more plain what its virtues teach, that the ideal of man's relation to God is the child's place in the home. It is distinctively

in two aspects that the highest Christian life assimilates to the life of a child.

The first is in *Self-forgetfulness*; in the absence of self-consciousness; in that unpremeditated service of purity and right which mark the virtue of the home. The boy of rich and cultured parents plays with the poor man's child. But no one would be absurd enough to say 'what humility and condescension are there!' The thought of humility has never once entered the heart of the lad. A child's face brightens as his father comes home from work in the evening, and the little one runs to greet him. But the father would never think of praising the boy for disinterestedness or unselfish affection. The thought that he is dependent and would sell his smiles has never polluted the young heart's love. Or when his very accent resembles his father's, and his handwriting grows almost identical, and every one recognises how like he has become in all his ways, it is not a conscious imitation that has done it. Admiration and love and constant presence conform his life to the fatherly life. He is thinking little of himself in the unstruggling naturalness of the life of home.

In such an aspect of the child-like mind the Kingdom of Heaven finds its type. If we are to believe our Master, the Kingdom of Heaven requires of its citizens to think little of themselves. Hard is the condition of that conscience whose state is what the physicians describe as atrophy—incapacity for feeling or anxiety at all. But hypertrophy, or over-care, is almost as far from the mind of Christ — the over-care which broods upon emotions and nourishes doubts and fears. The happy lot is to pass beyond anxiety for self into absorption in some higher cause. Such is the child-

like mind. Such is the spirit of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Can we wayfarers for years along the hard and grimy road of life win back to that childlike heart? By God's grace we can. The disciples meanly squabbling for selfish honour won it in fair degree. How much does St. Matthew say about St. Matthew in all the Gospel he was privileged to write? To what honour does he make a claim? And St. John, who entered the deepest into his Master's spirit and wrote the fullest record of His wondrous doings—St. John mentions himself not once. They forgot themselves in the cause of the Kingdom, as a child does his unconscious duty in the home. Just as in perfect health we should almost forget that we have a body, in perfect dutifulness we cease to think that we have a soul. Out of the gulfs of self-struggle, out of the tumult of self-enquiry, the highest life raises itself to the kingdom where self is nothing but Christ is all, where the cause absorbs the heart, and the life is given because the love is given, as without an interested motive or an after-thought a child runs to do its parent's bidding—only because it is the bidding of a voice that is dear.

There is also a receptive attitude of trust and love that is the continual attraction of a young child's mind—and the noble wisdom of the oldest and sagest man. The years tend to destroy it. That greediness to know, that willingness to be taught, that intuition of truth which makes knowledge come to children with a rapidity and a hold which are our constant surprise; above all, the sense of mystery which makes every step onward a delight—all that tends to disappear. We get instead our little certainties

and the vanity of seeing clearly. And—a poor substitute—from wondering faith we grow to what we call "knowingness," and the reverences get weaker and the great world small. There is no blindness so great as that of the very sharp eyes. There are no men so really ignorant as those who believe that they have plumbed all the mysteries of life. For this reason Christ has said that "God has hid things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes." For this reason, too, he calls us to the childlike mind. For the deepest truths come to us, and the wise of the world often miss what the childlike see. The mysteries are round us still as in those romantic days. The world is far more wonderful—if only we could keep the child's spirit of faith.

In the light of such certain truth it is marvellous that any should be found to deny to children a Christian education. It may be that some people have not met such theorists; but their number is not small. They think that the child's mind should in fairness be left fallow, unsown with the seed of any doctrine, until with faculties developed he should see and choose the truth for himself. Their scheme is based on an old delusion, not unfamiliar in current politics, that the compromise between all religions is no religion; as if "no religion" were not itself a religion—and a bad religion too. The truth is that as soon as consciousness wakens the capacity for reverence and worship is born, and if you give it not the truth round which to crystallise it will spend itself on idols which its own hands have framed. Children's hearts are the truest home for Christian religion, not indeed for the mawkish sentiment of an unreal and offensive talk, but for that adoration of the greatest and that

[illegible] of the holiest when we the mystery and the [illegible] of the highest faith. Never has seen us we [illegible] their reverent steps across the threshold of the Temple, and bid their hands be folded and their knees bent before the wonder that surrounds their life and the love that makes this earth divine.

The lives of many have been darkened by a grievous shadow for many a year because it has not been taught them lovingly enough and plainly that they were given to God in Holy Baptism from their earliest years and made His children. Those who have been baptized are no aliens from the kingdom needing to wait till they are sixteen or seventeen or eighteen years old till they become members of Christ's Church. Ever since they were brought to God in Baptism they have been His children, and when they are from Him it is from Home they stray; and when they feel weary in the far country and hungry for better things it is to no stranger they have to turn. They are dear children still and can say, "I will arise and go to my Father." What a misery it would have saved for many a soul had this great blessing which Baptism brings been given as a bond to the Father's house and a continual reminder of Home. A legend says that the child whom Jesus set in the midst that day when He gave the lesson of childhood's Virtue was Ignatius who was to grow up to pious and strenuous manhood and become St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, and martyr for the Cross of Christ, saying in his last hour when they bade him recant, "I have served the Lord Jesus all these many years; I have found Him a good Master to me: and shall I leave Him now?" The quiet and composure of that simple heroism found their source not from the tumultuous experience of a

late conversion, but from the even tenor of a homelike love which had never known what it was to be outside the Father's House.

Regeneration.—When John Henry Newman was an earnest youth of little more than twenty he drew up for himself an account of Conversion. It consisted mainly of Scriptural texts, and followed conventional lines. At the close he felt compelled to add: "I speak of conversion with great diffidence, being obliged to adopt the language of books. For my own feelings were so different from any account I have ever read that I dare not go by what may be an individual case." It would have been well if all theologians and preachers had displayed some measure of the same diffidence. For much of the language that is used on this subject of Conversion seems utterly unreal to the ordinary man or woman.

Let any one turn to the questions and answers in the Shorter Catechism which deal with the great characteristic teaching of the Reformation time about Justification, Adoption, Sanctification; he will feel unable either to use the language of the Catechism as his own natural speech, or even to understand very definitely what the language means. The Reformers meant every word of it; and, moreover, every word of it was true.

But when we adopt their vocabulary it is not the truthful expression of our own experience. When the ancient formulas are used, when the time-worn words fall on modern ears, they convey little more than a sense of conventionality, of unreality, if not of falsehood. That is why so many people feel that the services of the Church are dull and unrelated to

life. That is why practical people, who do not want to continue customs that are useless, are often led to forsake the worship of the Church. It is because so many teachers, like John Henry Newman when he wrote of Conversion, feel "obliged to adopt the language of books"—language which long since had become evacuated of power.

"Regeneration" is a sublime truth. When our Lord said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." He expressed a fundamental need of the soul. But when we are asked to say that "Justification is an act of God's free grace wherein He pardoneth all our sins and accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone," the trained theologian may see worth in every syllable: yet it leaves the ordinary believer indifferent to its truth or falsehood. The most modern interpreters of the New Birth of the Soul, with their appeal to the recent psychology, can sometimes dwell in a world of unreality as far away as any Calvinistic theologian from the understanding or interest of the plain Christian.

Professor Henry Drummond's teaching about Regeneration is almost forgotten. But all middle-aged people remember that he urged the necessity of a second birth of the soul on the analogy of nature, where life only springs from life. So, according to the doctrine of that once fashionable guide to popular theology, the soul of man is dead until the Spirit of God touches it and it is "born from above"—as he interpreted our Saviour's words. People were not long in discerning that the analogy was unsound, and the teaching it would enforce little short of terrible

were it true. But the final and most destructive criticism upon Henry Drummond's teaching concerning the New Birth was that people did not care whether it was true or false ; it was remote from the experience, the speculation, the longings of the general heart.

Some such judgement must be expressed regarding the doctrine of the New Birth which is associated with that fascinating thinker the late Professor William James. No one who has read his *Varieties of Religious Experience* can forget how the " once born " are dismissed as an imperfect type, and a wealth of imagination is devoted to a study of the experience of those who had passed through a spiritual transformation and were " twice born." Yet when one has read of St. Augustine and St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross and other illustrious men and women who had found such a second birth, one's mind harks back from books and theories, and one recalls the very best Christians one has known, in whose life there seems to have been no such explosive experience, who have lain " on Abraham's bosom all the year "—men and women whom we would venture to call Christ-like were that not too high a word to employ concerning even the best. And we turn to Jesus Christ Himself, who is the norm of what man should be : and all the fascinating theory of the American teacher seems somehow alien to what we ourselves have known of life.

The truth is that the vigorous and startling metaphor that Jesus used when He said, " Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God," has been twisted and tortured into shapes to which His teaching would have given no countenance. If we want to find its real content we have to turn from

discussions that are up in the air and to reach the actual facts of the case for human souls.

The facts of the case may be stated thus:—

There is such a universe of ideas as we are accustomed to call the "Kingdom of God." Whether we see it or not, we cannot deny the testimony of thousands of religious men and women to the existence of a great mass of spiritual beliefs and emotions amid which it is their delight to dwell. Whether God be in all our thoughts or not, we are well aware that there are thousands to whom the thought of God is the stay of their souls; and Jesus Christ and His salvation are as real as any sensory experience; and the forgiveness of sins and fellowship with the Redeemer are the most certain as they are the most blessed facts of life. A whole literature attests the existence of this Kingdom of God, the haunt of pious souls. Whether one responds to them or not, there are a hundred books in our own tongue like Scougal's *Life of God in the Soul of Man*, or the *Life of Robert Murray M'Cheyne*, which describe a frame of mind definitely spiritual, to which religious ideas and influences are far more living, insistent, and dominant than any other set of thoughts or desires. That is a surely ascertained fact.

Set over against it this other—that the interest which is the source of ecstasy to such minds merely wearies many others. That "universe" of ideas which is so native to a religious man and which stirs his heart so deeply is like a foreign country to thousands of his fellow-creatures. They pass through it uncomfortably, not knowing the language and not liking the people. This is not said about men commonly called "bad" or "immoral": but rather of men who sometimes or

often come to church and are leading regular lives. They speak in a natural accent of business or sport or politics: but the things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard—the inner experiences of the soul—are to them either incredible, or utterly indifferent. Such men do not care for religious talk or the company of religious people. They would feel out of place at a prayer meeting, and even in church they are uncomfortable if the spiritual atmosphere be too rare, if the spiritual note be struck too high. Any direct appeal to their religious sentiment either sounds unreal and conventional to such men, or they resent it as a suggestion of something that is not right in their present condition which they are not willing to admit. It can hardly be denied that some such language fits the facts of the case as they exist in many thousands of souls.

Is all this satisfactory? Can men and women rest under such conditions, so that a whole range of spiritual experiences is shut out from them? Is it no more important that a man should not see the Kingdom of God than it is that his ear is unmusical and he finds no pleasure in a concert, or his mind is unmathematical and he cannot grasp the significance of pure reasoning about numbers? It would be difficult to say that these matters are on an equal scale of importance. If a father saw his boy grow up into a fine physique, and yet, as his muscles developed, his mind remained childish; if he saw the lad come to maturity as a fine specimen of muscular humanity yet with no intellectual grasp or capacity; he would be distressed over him. It is not less a matter of concern that any man should be developed physically, and intellectually, and yet remain ignorant of the subtlest and most refined elements of the soul's

environment—seeing with intelligent eyes the kingdom of the world but blind to the Kingdom of God. There is something pitiful in the case of a man, responsive to every appeal of earth, but deaf and blind to the highest of all messages—those from the Spirit around him which address the spirit within him. The better a man is, the more we miss the spiritual in his nature—the awe, the reverence, the mystery, the tenderness that come from communion with God. There are men of the highest worth—dutiful, staunchly upright, generously kind—and yet, because their nature is closed to the upper world, and the spiritual in them makes no up-reach and finds no nourishment, there is over them a sadness, a sense that somehow they are missing things ; they are so good that one can only grieve that they are not better, are not men of God.

If this is all true to the facts of life, how shall we answer the question that follows inevitably : What is the hope for such as they ? What is the road that leads from the life of sense or mere intellectual interest into the life of the Spirit ? Nicodemus, the Jewish Rabbi who came to Jesus with his anxieties, would have said, " educate, educate." His hope from the Lord was that He was a teacher. " I know," he said, " that Thou art a teacher sent from God." But Jesus Himself said, " regenerate, regenerate." " Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." The root of character, He seemed to say—and here a popular school of psychology takes up the doctrine—the root of character is in the Will. The ultimate basis of such an expansion of human interest is in the soul's awakening, and the soul wakens when it is touched by soul. To see the Kingdom of God a man needs only to open his eyes.

Around us — bathing our souls as the atmosphere encircles and interpenetrates our life — is the Holy Spirit of God. A man needs only to become conscious of that environment, as at times we realise the breeze of heaven — usually the unperceived accompaniment of our physical life — and he is indeed born again, for he enters a new and wonderful world, the unseen world of the soul.

V

THE MAKING OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

Vows.—The practice of making vows was characteristic of Old Testament piety. Three typical illustrations will occur to any one who knows the Bible. At Bethel Jacob made a vow familiar to the Second Scottish Paraphrase; that, if God provided for his safety, he would erect a worship place at Bethel and endow it with tithes. Hannah, the childless wife, made a vow that, if God should give her a son, the lad should be dedicated to the priesthood from his infancy. Every one remembers Jephthah's rash vow that, if God should give him a victory over his enemy, he would sacrifice to God the first thing he met on his triumphant return. The first thing he met was his own dearly loved daughter whom his pledged word compelled him to slay.

In all these cases there was an element of condition in the vow, and what seemed to be a bargain. If God did His part, then His worshipper promised to pay his vows and pay his vow. But the transaction was not so grossly commercial as at first sight it might seem. The favour of God was altogether disproportioned to the recompense that was offered. Jacob and Hannah and Jephthah knew well that they were not offering to pay for God's blessing: that was beyond their power. They were only pledging their honour that God's goodness to them, if it were shown,

would make them more truly His servants. Though their vow was not on the highest religious level, it was not on a level of which our poor humanity need be ashamed.

In later days the Psalmist rose to higher things to a disinterested unconditional surrender of himself to God. Perhaps the religious vow is seen at its best when we hear the Psalmist declare his determination that he would not go into his own house or lie on his bed or take rest until he had provided for the House of the Lord. There is no flavour of bargaining about that 116th Psalm sung so regularly on Scottish Communion Sundays: "I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people."

The whole subject of Vows was matter for much legislation, chiefly contained in the Book of Numbers. The laws may be summed up in the sententious observation of the Preacher of a later time: "Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." It was not necessary to make the vow; but it was a sin to break it.

Signs are not wanting afterwards that the practice became degenerate. In the Book of Malachi we read of one who had pledged himself to make a sacrifice, and when the time came for fulfilling it he offered a blemished animal. On the only occasion on which our Lord Himself referred to the custom of making vows, it was to condemn with all the severity of His tender and compassionate nature the men who avoided their duty of supporting their parents because of having made a vow to dedicate their money to the Temple. Jesus seems to discountenance the practice

of making vows. And the writers of the New Testament hardly allude to it. On the one occasion in which St. Paul is mentioned in connection with a vow it is not certain whether the reference is to St. Paul or to his companion Aquila.

As was to be expected, it has been that part of the Christian Church which has cherished the more legal and ceremonial type of religion in which the practice of making vows has been most encouraged. Roman Catholic Christianity has given a high value to all such pledges — the higher value to the severer and more lasting obligations. On the whole, Protestantism has discouraged all such pledges on two grounds: first, that every vow is summed up in the Baptismal Vow, which makes all others unnecessary; and second, that evangelical freedom is a nobler position than servitude even to one's own plighted word. "Love," says the Protestant Church with St. Augustine, "love, and then do what you like."

It must not be supposed, however, that under Protestant teaching the practice of taking vows or pledges is altogether forbidden. The 22nd chapter of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* devotes itself to the matter of lawful oaths and vows, and it is expressly said that they are of value in "binding ourselves more strictly to necessary duties." John Calvin defines a vow as "an act of self-restraint by which a man keeps himself from falling into evil."

Such is the history of this religious practice. It has its roots in deep emotional experiences that are as familiar to-day as ever. Those who have had to do with the religious life of their friends have heard a man say by the dead body of his child, "We shall all be more regular in worship after this." Or a man

would say, "If God spare me through this trouble, I am going to be a better man." Perhaps there are few who have not been in the habit of making an occasional pledge that they would abstain for a period from some indulgence or undertake a share in some unaccustomed task. It is not even an unknown thing that a man should look ahead to some wished-for success, and in his heart dedicate to God's service in church or charity some proportion of the expected gain.

Such vows, though not unattended with moral risks, have a substantial service to render to character, and especially in two ways.

They help to keep alive in religion the sense of honour—that sense which has sometimes been weaker in religious people than in men of the world. The sense of honour is at the heart of the finest type of Japanese religion, that "Bushido" of which so much is heard and which has created such a splendid type of soldier and citizen in Japan. It should be equally near to the core of Christianity. And everything that trains it, everything that makes a man realise that his word once given is a sacred thing, to be kept in spite of any inconvenience or repentance or indolence, every vow and pledge which is scrupulously paid, is a contribution to some of the finest elements of character.

Vows serve a second purpose as a buttress of the will. If we were always sure of ourselves there would be no need of vows. If we always lived at our highest levels, resolutions for the guidance of conduct would be a waste of energy. But we are not always at our best. Knowing the weakness of our wills in face of the irksomeness of some temptations, and the fierce rush and whirlwind of others, we do well in moments of insight when the mind is clear to pledge ourselves

to the side of goodness against those hours when judgement is obscured by desire. When the hour of evil temptation comes, it will not only be our conscience that will help us; our solemn promise also will rally our self-respect to our aid. We stand firm, not only because we want to stand, but because we should break our vow if we fell. Thus the will discovers what one may call the "Freedom of Constraint"—the comfort of knowing that one is pledged and that there are not two courses open. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" said St. Peter. "Henceforth," said St. Paul, "let no man trouble me, for I bear on my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Men and women find the whole guidance of life much easier when it is known about them that their views are definite, and that they have taken a side. There is no use in tempting them; they are superior to the temptation, for they have made their vow. Most specially is all this true about the earlier years of life. It is good for a parent to take a pledge from boy or girl against such indulgences as the use of wine or tobacco before (let us say) the age of twenty-one.

Such services to character are rendered by the practice of making vows. Yet the risks attending the practice are so many and so dangerous that it requires to be guarded with scrupulous care. It is a good custom for those who have to advise First Communicants, at a time of highly-strung emotional experience, to bid them be sedulously cautious in regard to the resolutions they make. A rash vow, for example, a vow made when the imagination is inflamed and the experience of life is small, might become a hideous burden upon the conscience—a sense of honour requiring its fulfilment, but the judgement declaring its folly

or even its wrongfulness ; while, again, a vow made and afterwards broken leaves a permanent mark on character. A man after such a failure thinks more meanly of himself. Over against his self-respect stands the ghost of that breach of his plighted word.

Certain cautions and rules, therefore, must dominate the vows which a Christian finds himself free to make.

Absolute sincerity, and the resolute intention of paying the vow, must be a first condition of the frame of mind of the man who makes it. The learned reformer, Erasmus, was never tired of mocking at the make-believe piety of his day which so often resorted to vows to the saints. He told of a sailor in a dangerous storm who kept shrieking to St. Christopher of Paris that, if by the saint's aid he was rescued from the sea, he would give him a wax taper as tall as himself. "Do not call so loud," said a sailor-comrade, "for you will never be able to pay such a vow." "Do you think that I mean to ?" was the answer : "if my foot were once safely on land, I should not give him so much as a tallow candle." The insincerity of such a man makes one see that a resolution formed, a vow pledged, without the definite conviction and purpose that it will be fulfilled, only shakes a man's trust in himself and his self-respect — only weakens and degrades.

A man who makes a vow must be sure that it can be fulfilled ; that it is within his power to keep it ; that circumstances may not arise in which it would be difficult or even wrong that the promise should be kept. For example, First Communicants should make before God a solemn vow that at no time would they ever omit their daily prayer. That is a vow which can be kept, and should be kept. But there are other duties,

no less commendable, which a hundred unforeseen obstacles might arise to hinder, and conscience would inevitably and sorrowfully be pained by the failure.

A third principle of Protestantism is wholly wise. As a rule, vows should not be perpetual; they should be limited in time. It is pitiful to think of the constrained and uncongenial existence which some nuns of the Roman Church must pass: women who have discovered that they had no real vocation for the "religious life" (as it is technically called) but who yet are prisoners to it—if not locked in by bolts and bars, locked in by the more effectual bond of their plighted word. It is of the very genius of Protestantism to forbid such mechanical methods, and to call men and women to walk in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free.

Yet, when the risks that attend a religious vow are kept in mind, and the rules which should guard it are observed, there must be (or else many saints of God have been self-deceived) a very solemn delight and privilege when a long-cherished purpose can be fulfilled.

Some people remember how happy they were that day when an old promise was redeemed, an old vow to God paid. Among the beautiful things in life there are few finer memories than of such a day.

Habit.—There is little that is more sorrowful in the history of English literature than the record of the evil habit into which Samuel Taylor Coleridge fell. He was a brilliant and meteoric genius, a poet and a critic, and a speculative thinker of the foremost rank. But his later years were clouded over by the practice of taking opium. How the habit weakened his sense of honour and duty and injured his imagination, Coleridge himself

has told us in his poem "Dejection." What the slavery to such a habit means we may guess from a letter he wrote to a friend. "For ten years the anguish of my spirit has been inexpressible; but the consciousness of my guilt has been worse. I have prayed for deliverance with drops of agony on my brow, trembling not only before the justice of my God but even before the mercy of my Redeemer. You bid me rouse myself. Better go and bid a man paralysed in both arms to rub them together and it will cure him. You have no conception of the dreadful hell of my mind and conscience and body. You bid me pray. Oh, I do pray—to be able to pray." That was a pitiful spectacle—the great, vigorous, cultivated intellect in bondage to a monster he himself had created. It is the classical example of the tyranny of evil habits. In Coleridge's case it seems that some measure of emancipation was found in later years. Under the care of friends, of whom he had many, his will seemed to assert its mastery, at least in some degree, and the great genius was not the abject devotee of a degraded appetite that he had been. But his life remains as an appalling reminder of the power of Habit.

We are, however, too apt to look for the illustration of this factor in human life only in the conspicuous and sorrowful wrecks which it has caused. People speak as if habits were never good but always bad, and as if they were concerned only with one or two appetites instead of with every function of the body and the soul. The truth is that (in the old phrase) we are a "bundle of habits"; and he who would rightly interpret for us the meaning of these laws of character must deal not with the exceptional but with the ordinary. A man like Coleridge is an "awful example"

of the power of habit; but there is not the humblest career in which its illustration is not found.

If we pursued the subject in a scientific spirit we should seek first for the physical basis of habit. Nerve substance has a wonderful readiness to receive and register impressions, and to react more readily to every impulse on which it has acted before, as if feet made a track on a hillside and every foot that came afterwards naturally followed where the marks of the track were seen. No passing foot fails to make the pathway plainer. We fancy that one act means nothing, and is forgotten. But it has yielded its contribution to habit, and it remains. A man in Jefferson's play *Rip Van Winkle* was a drunkard, and he used to say of each indulgence in his vice, " I shall not count this time." He may not have counted it. But a nerve cell took note of it; and the next time his temptation came, that cell added its appeal to the craving of his appetite, and he was by so much the weaker man.

Doubtless such physical facts are at the basis of habit. But we can interpret it for ourselves out of experience, and read the biography of habit in our lives. If we look back twenty or thirty years, we recall how we began some practice that has now become the familiar custom of every day. It needs no ingenuity to find examples. Let it be some careful habit, like that of keeping a record of expenditure. We bought a notebook twenty years ago, and entered in it on the first evening the expenses of the day. The task was irksome at first, and often we were tempted to intermit it or throw into some generality like " miscellaneous " the record of the daily spending. But we persevered. A certain satisfaction at our own regularity, and a certain pride in exactness, grew with the custom until,

after years had passed, the practice had become easy, and we should miss it sorely were it to cease. In some such way, under the two laws that "what we do often becomes easy" and "what we do often becomes pleasant," are all our habits, good and bad, developed. Then middle age comes, and habit is a second nature, and we have made ourselves what we are. We should be dissatisfied were we shaken out of life's well-worn grooves. Circumstances little attractive at first have become bearable, or even pleasant; and tasks that were painful have lost all their pain by familiarity. We would not change them for others that are new. There is a wonderful passage in Byron's *Prisoner of Chillon* in which he makes that prisoner regret the dungeon to which he had grown accustomed:

> At last men came to set me free,
> I asked not why, and recked not where,
> It was at length the same to me
> Fettered or fetterless to be,
> I learned to love despair.
> And thus when they appeared at last,
> And all my bonds aside were cast,
> These heavy walls to me had grown
> A hermitage—and all my own!
> And half I felt as they were come
> To tear me from a second home:
> . . . . .
> My very chains and I grew friends;
> So much a long communion tends
> To make us what we are:—even I
> Regained my freedom with a sigh.

In some such way as this would a teacher of moral philosophy state for us the elementary principles that are at the root of habit. "Sow an act," he would

say, " and you reap a habit " : " sow a habit and you reap a character " : " sow a character and you reap a destiny."

Starting from such facts—not less important because they are not recondite or strange—a teacher of religion should have some grave words to say regarding two things — the Formation of Good Habits, and the Breaking of Bad Habits.

On the first subject he would need to speak chiefly to the young, and to those who have the care of the young. For it is in the early years that habits are most easily formed. " Live as long as you may," said Southey, " the first twenty years is the largest half of life." Scientific students of this matter have confirmed the poet's statement and have maintained that most of our personal habits are formed before the age of twenty-five. Whether that be so or not, there can be no doubt that our nature loses its plasticity as the years go on : the grooves in which the wheels of life run have deepened so that they can with difficulty be over-passed. The great rule for youth is therefore this : Make automatic and unconscious as many useful habits as you can : take from the sphere of will the regulation of lower appetites and passions, and hand it over to the charge of wholesome habits, so that the mind may be free for the higher tasks of intelligence and duty. Make the nervous system the ally of virtue, because its unconscious and habitual servant, good conduct in the lower spheres being no longer a struggle but the easy and mechanical obedience of a disciplined nature.

This is why youth is the time for law : and those people make a great mistake who leave too much to the spontaneity of an unformed mind. Boys and girls

should learn to do their appointed tasks at the appointed hour, whether they like them or not. Boys and girls should learn the habit of attention, rescuing the mind out of vacuous wandering and concentrating on definite thoughts.

Even in the higher sphere (the spiritual) habits can be formed by diligence and training, and are not to be despised because they seem to have an air of the mechanical. In the revolt from the formalised discipline of Roman Catholic piety we have lost much of the value that is in their regulation of life. The Quakers have been the most extreme Protestants in this respect, and will have no duty of religion done until, as they phrase it, "the Spirit moves us"—until some devotional impulse come. But, though Romanism may have erred by over stringent discipline, it is nearer to human nature than the Quakers are. Even of our blessed Master it is written that on the Sabbath Day He went into the synagogue "as His custom was." So we should "say our prayers" when the time for saying them comes even if we feel little inclined for prayer. At the worst, we can confess our prayerless spirit, and ask to be guided better. Good habits of the soul are as easily lost as good habits of the body, and the boy or girl who only prays or reads the Bible when he or she wants will most likely grow up to be a man or woman who never prays and reads the Bible at all.

> Ill habits gather by unseen degrees,
> As brooks make rivers, rivers run to seas.

On all this—though it may not seem a distinctively Gospel message—those who have the charge of young lives would do well to ponder.

It is necessary to say something further on a graver matter—the Breaking of Bad Habits. If we were to take the words of the Old Testament literally, we should fancy that this could in no wise be done. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Yet those famous words are only a rhetorical warning about the awful power of evil habit, not a despairing declaration of the hopelessness of overcoming habits.

> Alas, indeed, for the man
> Who all in later, sadder age begins
> To war against ill habits of a life.
> For these from all his life arise and cry,
> Thou hast made us lords and canst not put us down.

There is an awe-inspiring passage in St. Augustine's *Confessions* in which he wrote: "For this very thing I was sighing—bound as I was, not with another's irons, but by my own will. For of a froward will was a lust made: and a lust served became a custom: and a custom not resisted became necessity. By which links, as it were joined together, a hard bondage held me enthralled." Yet that very man Augustine was set free from his evil habits and became and is rightly called Saint Augustine—the greatest teacher of the Christian Church since the days of the Apostles. The Ethiopian changed his skin and the leopard his spots, and he who was accustomed to do evil learned to do good. There would be no use at all in the Gospel of Christ if it were not a Gospel for habit. That were indeed a weary task which is given to the minister of religion if he could not tell, out of his experience, of men and women fast-bound in evil whom he has seen delivered and walking happily in the liberty of the people of

God. There are drunkards and libertines in every city whom Christ has touched, as He touched the publicans and harlots of old, and cleansed the lepers, and they can tell, by ordered and useful lives better than by words of testimony, that even the tightest-wound chains can be broken, and the fastest-bolted prison doors be opened by His redeeming love. "The expulsive power of a new affection" was the great phrase with which Dr. Chalmers described the message of deliverance which Christ has brought to many a character over whom evil habits had held sway.

When we come to the detail of method by which such evil habits can be broken it is well to follow those who have made the subject a scientific study. In his *Principles of Psychology* William James gave four rules.

First, launch yourself on the new course with as strong an initiative as possible. By that rule he means, Let there be no hesitation about reform and no half measures. As Cæsar, when he invaded Italy and crossed the Rubicon, burned the boats by which he had crossed, so that there was no going back even if his will weakened, so it is good for a man to commit himself definitely—perhaps even publicly—to take his stand by clearly outlined and intelligible rules of which there is only one interpretation. Dr. Jekyll when he decided to reform did not destroy the potion by which he used to change himself into Mr. Hyde. A wise man would have destroyed the potion. Buttress the will by every wall of difficulty that can be reared.

Professor James's second rule is, "Never suffer an exception to occur till the new habit is securely rooted in your life." By that rule he means, Do not give in to the temptation to say "Only this once." "It will not matter to-day." "I am not doing it often."

That is not the road to safety. A single lapse is like the letting fall of a ball of string which one is winding up: a single slip undoes more than a great many turns will wind again.

The third rule is, "Seize the very first possible opportunity to act on every resolution you make, and on every emotional prompting you may experience in the direction of the habits you aspire to gain." Purposes and feelings are of little use if we do not practise them. The way to fix a belief in the mind is to act upon the hypothesis that it is true. The way to cultivate a habit is to translate into the sphere of the Will every emotion of the heart in its direction. It is just as true to say that the way to be good is to do good, as it is to say that the way to do good is to be good.

Then Professor James gives a fourth advice: "Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day." Here he is at one with great directors of the human conscience. Newman gave the counsel that if no opportunity of self-sacrifice occurred in the course of a day we should make opportunities of self-denial for ourselves—not that there is any special virtue in being uncomfortable, but because it is valuable to learn the habit of doing readily what we do not like to do.

By such counsels as these evil habits may be slowly broken and better ways trained. No one should grieve that the difficulties are so great and the process is so slow. For, if bad habits were easily broken, good habits would be unstable too, and the character would be at the mercy of the impulses of the hour. But the laws of habit which are so stern and inexorable where evil is concerned, have a most gracious aspect when we see them guide a good man. Even

the best have their hours of weaker will—what the engineers would call the "dead point," where the power of the driving machinery is lost. There the inertia of habit carries a man over the "dead point" and he is safe, because it is not in impulses he is trusting wholly, but in the steady devotion of a cultivated will. There come also, to the best, hours of depression when faith and love are not the vivid realisation of communion with God, but rather the memory of happier hours. Here once more habit comes to bless and guide:

> We cannot kindle when we will
> The fire that in the heart resides;
> The spirit bloweth and is still,
> In mystery the soul abides.
> But tasks in hours of insight willed
> Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.

The Christian conscience is often uneasy at the enjoyment of comforts and pleasures of which others are deprived. No fact of religious experience is more pressing upon the modern mind, and it is well to discuss it frankly.

Luxury.—It is told of a certain rich man that he had built for himself a stately mansion. He had spared no expenditure to make his house magnificent. Especially he had lavished money on a great central hall, panelled and upholstered and made both splendid and luxurious. In the hall was a huge fireplace. And when all was completed the rich man had an inscription carved over the mantelpiece. This was what they wrote for him: "Simon Peter stood and warmed himself." The rich man—who was also a good man—meant that when he looked at that text he should be

recalled to the perils of comfort, the peril lest when he himself was warmed and clothed and fed he should forget or deny his Lord.

There is a story about Richard Cobden that has the same meaning in it. He said once to a friend, " When I go to church there is one prayer which I say with my whole soul: 'In all time of our wealth good Lord deliver us.' " If we are to believe the teaching of Jesus, the dangers of comfort, luxury, wealth are numerous and insidious.

In the famous phrase of Savage Landor, people are " warming both hands at the fire of life." There has been a growth of luxurious expenditure in our day greater than has been seen in any community since the beginning of the Christian era. It is no wonder that Christian teachers are awakening to the necessity of some restatement of the Gospel teaching regarding the matter of personal comfort.

The most deplorable result of the growth of the spirit of self-regarding luxury has been seen in the increasing reluctance of young people to face the responsibilities of marriage. An utterly false standard of material surroundings makes them want to begin with all the comforts with which their parents are ending life. Unless they have means to permit of entertainments and travel, they evade the natural relationships of our human life. It is not necessary to say anything of vicious practices, whose root also is in a selfish love of luxury and whose effect is seen in the remarkable reduction of the birth-rate in our country. But in face of such facts it is high time for the Christian community to face for itself the problem: How far is it right for man or woman to surround life with the appliances and means of comfort; and what are the

guiding principles by which middle-class people should be directed in an existence which is normally one of a certain measure of luxury ?

At first it might be supposed by the random reader of the Gospel that poverty is the only school of virtue, and that to be a Christian one ought to abandon every possession not absolutely necessary to life, and to seek the fellowship of Him who had not where to lay His head. This would be a most serious call upon the conscience of almost every one in a Christian congregation, for most of such people have comfortable homes, and the houses of many are adorned with beautiful objects of art and are furnished with taste and cost. There is probably in the mind of many middle-class people an uneasy feeling that their comforts are not altogether justifiable on the principles of their religion, and that, to some extent, at least they are hypocrites when they describe themselves as Christians.

This, however, need not be believed. Our Lord gave most manifest sanction to the possession of property to some extent. Even the passages in which the opposite seems to be taught are really a confirmation of the rights of property. The rich young ruler was bidden to sell all that he had ; but he had no right to sell what did not belong to him. Injunction was laid upon men to give to the poor ; but we cannot give what is not ours. It is true that Lazarus, the poor man, was in Paradise, and Dives, the rich man, was in hell ; yet it must not be forgotten that Lazarus, poor as he was, was in the company of a very rich man, Abraham. Our Lord consorted with some men of wealth. He dined with Zaccheus ; He accepted the ministry of women of substance ; Joseph of Arimathea was numbered with His disciples. Moreover, He

gave His sanction to a kindly hospitality. Those meals which we like to offer to our friends cannot be displeasing to Him who sat at the marriage feast at Cana. Hospitality is approved, and indeed enjoined, by His great apostle, St. Paul. Hospitality enlarges the sympathies. When it is not ostentatious, and when conversation is on a right level, it draws men out of their isolations and sweetens the temper of daily work. There should, indeed, be often present at our dinner-tables the silent thought of the poor; and prodigality should be checked by the remembrance of those who awake in the morning ignorant of where they are to get their daily food, and of the children who peer into the shop windows with hungry, envious eyes. But no man need think himself an alien from Christ because he likes to give his friends and neighbours a good meal.

Our Lord has sanctioned also a certain expenditure on objects of art. His acceptance of the precious spikenard, and His ever-memorable praise of her who gave it, is a warrant for feeding the imagination as well as the body, and for surrounding ourselves with such things of beauty as are educative, refining, and satisfactory to a pure æsthetic taste. The whole of our Lord's teaching, so far as it concerns these particulars, may be summed up thus:—Poverty is not a virtue in itself; to some it may be a hindrance. It may compel a man to turn to uncongenial tasks when he is fitted for something better, so that he is cutting blocks with a razor. It may deprive a man of the means of self-development by books and travel through which he might have immensely profited. On the other hand, comfort is not an evil in itself; it may elicit some of the best traits of character. A man with a little surplus of money has opportunities of benevolence that are

denied to the poor and that are among the noblest instruments by which a soul is trained.

There is no teaching of Jesus that would hinder a man or woman of the middle class, while still abiding in that class and retaining the measure of comfort which it implies, from becoming a noble and illustrious follower of the Son of Man.

Yet no one can read the Gospels without realising that our Lord was keenly sensitive to the perils which await the comfortable. The great classic passage is the story of the Rich Farmer who has come to be known as the Rich Fool. He learned to seek only a material standard of happiness, and the desire of accumulation became his passion. "I will pull down my barns and build greater." All his thought was of himself, to the ignoring of the needs of others. It was "my" house, "my" barns, he spoke of, as now a man would boast of "my" establishment, "my" motor-car. And his spirit was so incrusted with materialism—that is what the Bible calls the "hardening of the heart"—that his only aspiration was for ease: "I will take mine ease, eat, drink, and be merry," was his reflection—the spiritual part of him dead; imagination and faith and charity dead; all that makes real manhood in him dead also. When a company of middle-aged comfortable men get together, the talk constantly turns to some matter of money, what this man has left, what that man is worth, and so forth. It is the peril of a comfortable life that its ideals perish amid the mechanical and material routine of business interests. It was not without significance that our Lord, in one of His parables, spoke of a "bed" and a "bushel" as the coverings under which the lamp of truth might be discovered. Did He think of men's laziness, and

men's preoccupation with business, as the great hindrances to the spread of the Gospel? Those are the spiritual perils of the comfortable life. Because we are too slack, or too selfishly busy, the Kingdom lingers, and we ourselves lose what is best in life. Such dangers attend the comfortable lot. Certain guiding principles concerning them are clearly indicated in the Gospel.

In the comfortable home of Martha and Mary and Lazarus a grave rebuke was given to the "anxious and troubled" hospitality that was offered to the Lord. He plainly taught that a certain moderation and restraint and simplicity and good sense should mark a home. Every thoughtful social teacher has echoed that teaching of the Master. And our own experience has amply confirmed its wisdom. There is a type of man who spares nothing on himself and his house, and who has the reputation of being lavish and free-handed and no niggard. But is that the man whom one can depend upon for a good subscription to church or charity? Are we quite sure that he is even providing decently for his family when he dies? And does not some of the gilt come off his liberality when we realise that ostentation and carelessness and selfishness are at the root of it, and he spends so freely on himself that he has nothing to spare for those good and generous causes which make their constant appeal? Plato said concerning the temperate life "that it is in all things gentle, having gentle pains and gentle pleasures, and placid desires, and loves not insane." That description of a refined and cultivated life suits well with the ideal which Jesus set for the expenditure of men and women of comfortable means. It is difficult to keep such simplicity of character amid a prosperous life; but nothing great is easy.

A second counsel our Lord provided for those who live in comfort: Give of your means for the care of the poor and the advancement of the Kingdom of God. There is a passage in the writings of the American thinker Thoreau in which he tells that in his out-of-doors life amid the rigours of a Western winter, he sawed up and burned so many trees and planks for fuel; and at the last he set himself the question, "What did I do when I was warm?" Jesus would have us give a worthy reply. He would have us say: "God has been good to me; the remembrance of my own comfort makes my heart tender; I try to consider and help the poor."

Jesus, indeed, takes the duty of benevolence for granted and rather dwells on the cautions by which the benevolent must be guided. A casual alms to a beggar may be no token of charity; it may only be a sign of laziness, or cowardice, or vanity, or self-indulgence; and ever the thought must check us that it is not the hunger but the man that we want to help. There could not be a better summary of what our Lord teaches in this respect than the epitaph which is written over General Gordon's tomb in St. Paul's Cathedral:

MAJOR-GENERAL CHARLES GORDON, C.B.,
WHO AT ALL TIMES
AND EVERYWHERE GAVE HIS STRENGTH
TO THE WEAK,
HIS SUBSTANCE TO THE POOR,
HIS SYMPATHY TO THE SUFFERING,
HIS HEART TO GOD.

A third controlling principle which our Master presented for the guidance of all to whom God has given

comfortable means was the thought that they are "means" and not an end, and that it is God who has given them. That is the root teaching of the parable of the Talents. We are trustees of all we have—not owning it, but owing it; and like trustees we must be prudent and careful and ready to give an account for all. The end is a permanent establishment of character, compared with which all fleeting possessions that we cannot carry away are as nothing. People have wondered what it was that made Samuel Johnson say as he looked at David Garrick's rooms, full of many beautiful and costly treasures, "Ah, Davy, Davy, these are the things that make death terrible." Was it merely that the great man thought of the wrench which the parting with such possessions would imply? Or was it rather the fear that, in devotion to the surroundings of life, the life itself should be left mean and bare, and, when at last the soul was torn from its accustomed home, it should go out a pauper?

The conclusion of the whole matter is that if a man or woman realises every good gift of God as indeed from Him, and to be used for Him; if comfort means a call to kindly ministries, and our own warmly blazing hearth be an invitation to generosity and simple beneficence, there may be trained amid the surroundings of middle-class homes a type of piety second to none in its practical charities, in its application of Christian principles to the ordinary problems of life.

The Sense of Failure.—There are certain morbid growths in the human body which doctors speak of as "benign" or "malignant"; and it makes all the difference to an unfortunate patient whether he

suffers from the one or the other. The same diagnosis may be applied to the doubts and the sense of failure which so often attack all men and women—at least after their first youth is past. Some of them may be called "malignant" and some "benign."

It is not unjust, for example, to say that the sense of failure which is accompanied with a perfect self-complacency and blames any other rather than one's self can only be called "malignant." Such cases occur in the clerical profession, and may injure fewer feelings if they are referred to. There are ministers who have made no mark in the Church, and who know now, at the back of their minds, that they never will. But they do not think of blaming themselves—their own idleness, or quarrelsomeness, or self-indulgence, or ignorance of the world, or their lack of spiritual intensity or weight of character. The fault has been with others who have been their enemies, and chiefly with certain schemers and wire-pullers who have been working underground to frustrate their advancement. Those men would have done great things if they had not been systematically passed by. The truth, of course, is that in the Church of Scotland the men who ought to be guides, and to have some measure of patronage, are too little trusted and have too little power; and, so far as they have influence at all, are looking anxiously around to see what promising and energetic and able men can be recommended for promotion. It is a sorrowful case when this is not believed, and a minister can find no explanation for his failure except the underhand opposition of enemies. There is hardly a more deplorable sign of degeneracy than when a man begins to speak in such a way.

The illustration is applicable in almost every walk of life—in the professions, and in business, and even in the commonest social sphere. It shows a lamentable want of self-knowledge, and a vanity which in such cases is almost incurable because it is impervious to the sense of humour. It is always in danger of hardening down to a real disgust with life, and that despair of its value which is the Nemesis of middle age without virtue and hope. A man seems to himself to be bound to the wheel of life, as the Buddhists would say, bound to a wheel which does not advance like that of a carriage, but rotates dully on a fixed axle. Life then becomes an almost intolerable succession of unfruitful tasks. Much of each day is taken up with the processes of dressing and undressing, and eating and drinking, and utterly meaningless household duties; and office and workshop present such a routine of tiresome detail that the weariness of its repetition becomes a brooding melancholy. A man says, "I am but a fly amid innumerable flies upon the great wheel of life that grinds round and round and round." That is Calvinism without the grace of God. Calvinism is a stern system at the best. Without the grace of God it is an easy avenue to despair.

There is no harsh judgement in saying that such doubts about the worth of life are a malignant growth. What physician's art can heal them? Perhaps they will only yield to the sharp moral surgery of the great disciplines of life—grief or sickness. They seem incurable by the redemptive influence of Love.

Though there is a sense of failure, and a doubt concerning the worth of life, which is rightly described as "malignant," one must not deny that it also presents itself in less dangerous guise when it may be called

" benign." Who that reflects at all has escaped some sense of the inefficacy of his best work, and the narrow range of his influence ? " The petty done, the undone vast " must haunt any deeply conscientious spirit, and humble him often with the memory of his smallness. The size of the work which is before a philanthropist or religious reformer is almost enough of itself to paralyse effort. The problem of the cities is so stupendous that a fearful heart may hesitate as to attacking it. It also may be said with truth that it is more difficult, under modern conditions, for any individual to make a mark in the world than in former generations. The individual is absorbed and lost in the crowded and conflicting interests of modern time. It is given to a few to work great wonders—to men like the late General Booth of the Salvation Army. But most people may be well content if they can say : " I have cheered a poor soul in his destitution and sickness, and have associated his troubles with some memory of human brotherhood ; I have tried my best with a few lads in a Sunday School class to make them honour the ideals and aim after a clean life. The slums will be there when I am gone, just as they are to-day, and the awful problems of vice and misery will seem to have been untouched. I have laboured in vain, it may be ; but at least I have done my best."

It is not a cheap melancholy, it is the verdict of common truth for most people, that we seem to have been marking time and to have left no permanent traces of our walk through the years. There is no more suggestive commentary on such a feeling than that which is given in the 12th chapter of St. John's Gospel, where the Evangelist tells concerning the Lord that in the midst of His trouble of spirit He

prayed to the Father to glorify His name, and was comforted by a knowledge that His prayer was heard. And yet nine verses farther down the page of the record St. John wrote that "though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him."

The sense of failure which troubled even that great Spirit cannot be utterly wrong in us. It is so that Jesus wins His way closest to our hearts, and asserts His brotherhood so winsomely. "Christianity," said "Mark Rutherford," "is essentially the religion of the unknown and the lonely, of those who are not a success. It is the religion of the man who goes through life thinking much but who makes few friends and sees nothing come of his thoughts." That is true, and finely said, though it must be taken with certain qualifications. And if it be true at all, it is mainly because Jesus Himself has shown us how the sense of failure can be transcended by a glorious faith in God.

There are three mosaics in St. Mark's Cathedral at Venice in which this truth is suggestively indicated. The scene is Gethsemane, and Christ is represented in His thrice-repeated act of prayer. The devout artist shows Him at the first time prone upon the ground, and the sky above Him an unrelieved blackness. The second time He is raised a little, and a strip of blue appears in one corner of the sky. The third time He kneels with head erect, and a beam of glorious light strikes down from Heaven upon Him, and a strengthening angel is by His side. Such was the experience of our Master; and at every hour of our discouragement in the midst of every realisation of our failure to achieve great results, or make great advance in character, the same strengthening and conquering hope in God is presented to our souls.

There is an all-wise, all-merciful judgement. "Surely my judgement is with the Lord." That is the thought at the heart of that noble funeral hymn which begins, "Now the labourer's task is o'er."

> There the tears of earth are dried;
> There its hidden things are clear;
> There the work of life is tried
> By a juster Judge than here.

It is God only who sees us and our work in right proportions, and judges things as they are. Not only what we have done but what we have honestly tried to do; not only our wrong-doing but the temptations we have resisted; not only the life that the world knows but the hidden things of darkness, the obscure and tangled motives of the heart. It may be, even, that His judgement on the importance of human labours may be fixed by a different standard from that measure of size and far-reachingness which we set. The quiet teaching of a dingy mission-room: the visits of which no one knows to the city close: the little friendly counsel to lad or girl that made all the difference: even the self-controlled equable temper which sweetened a home—those things may have a place in the All-wise Judge's commendation which the noisy, tumultuous achievements of the great may not win. Be that so or not, we know that our duties, faithfully fulfilled, are estimated according to their real value. The writer to the Hebrews said: "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love."

Another controlling thought is that the result of all good work is sure. No labour, however inconspicuous, no humblest striving after right, can wholly fail. It is taken up into and becomes part of that

great immortal plân for the race which, never hasting, never resting, moves onward to the consummation. "My work is with God." It is only at its beginnings yet. In the cycles of God's providence, what is a year, or a decade, or the span of a human life? St. Luke tells in the opening verses of the Acts of the Apostles that, in the Gospel which bears his name, he had given the record of what Jesus "began both to do and teach." Even the Lord's life on earth was only the prelude to what He is doing and teaching now. The greatest men have realised vividly that we are but at the start of things. "Life," wrote Emerson in his old age to his friend Carlyle, also by that time an aged man, "seems to me ever more and more initial. We have only come here to view the ground and look up materials and tools." So do we also, as the swift years pass, discover to our surprise that life hardly seems to have begun when already we are contemplating the close; and the sun goes westering down to the sea. We can but begin: but the task is in immortal hands. What a glory do the immortal years shed down upon the scene of our brief striving amid the swiftly vanishing days of time; how they rescue our hearts from despondency, and make us believe that while we pass and the place that knew us knows us no more, "our work is with God" and cannot fail. "Therefore," St. Paul said in those august and solemn words with which he closed his chapter on the Resurrection life—words that have brought comfort to millions of Christian folk when their need was sorest, "my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Success and Failure.—If men of ability do not always command success, it is good to enquire into the reasons, and fit the facts if we can into a Christian scheme of things.

There is little doubt about the fact that the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. We look back over our own experience to the men and women we knew who were starting life together with us. Many of them have not belied their promise, and have done well: some of them splendidly. But one thinks of this one and that one, clever to the verge of brilliancy, the easy winner of every school and college prize, the admitted leader of every company, and—where is he now? Dull people are in great places, and all sorts of unexpected distinctions have come to plodding mediocrity; but the genius of our young days is a failure. What has happened?

There is no use in spending time over a cause to which many unfortunate men attribute their failure, namely, the ingratitude, neglect, and enmity of the world. It is the most sorrowful period in a man's life when he begins to attribute his failures to having enemies. There is no enemy so dangerous as one's self. For one swift runner tripped up by a rival or a jealous foe, there are a hundred who have made themselves fall. We do well to look for the causes of failure in the moral sphere rather than outside of ourselves, and we should deal honestly with our consciences.

Oftenest there is some fault—secret at first it may be, though hardly secret for long—that drags like a heavy weight on a man's career. Every one can think of the men they knew in the old days, in whom the signs of self-indulgence were little more than amiable and, as we fancied, humorous. The clever man was cleverer

than usual in his cups. Who would have thought that his career was to be the sordid sorrow it has been ? " Be not deceived. God is not mocked : whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

Sometimes, again, a certain intellectual twist and unreliability has been the secret of comparative failure. " You never knew where you had the genius," we used to say. A man of brains does not always adjust himself to things as they are, and often has no adequate understanding of human nature, and mars a fine talent by eccentricity and caprice.

The want of concentration, again, has tripped up many in their path through life. The very versatility that is a token of a man's genius has been his undoing. Versatility, such as Leonardo da Vinci had, compels admiration. But such gifts are for the exceptional. Most men, however able they be, need to work like galley slaves in one department if they are to accomplish anything or acquire any distinction. It is because the genius often refuses to work—refuses to see anything relevant in Carlyle's famous definition of his gift as " an infinite capacity for taking pains "—that he so frequently makes shipwreck of his career. St. Paul had natural gifts that could be put into comparison with the best, but he tells us that he needed to concentrate. " This one thing I do," he said. It is because many clever people have no such absorbing purpose that their career is so often nugatory and ineffective ; and dull people pass them in the race.

Every young person should know the purple page in Macaulay's *Essays* in which he tells about Warren Hastings, that as a poor boy in the woods of Daylesford, which once belonged to his ancestors, Hastings dreamed

that he would make for himself a great career, and buy back again the Daylesford which his forefathers had owned. "The purpose formed in infancy," wrote Macaulay, "grew stronger as his intellect expanded and his fortunes rose. He pursued it in that calm but indomitable force of will which was the most striking peculiarity of his character. When, under a tropical sun, he ruled fifty millions of Asiatics, his hopes—amid all the cares of war, finance, and legislation—still pointed to Daylesford. And when his long public life, so singularly chequered with good and evil, with glory and obloquy, had at length closed for ever, it was to Daylesford that he returned to die."

Such a purpose of life, honourable as it was, does not ask to be described as the highest: but it is no more than the truth that, because our lives are so little dominated by any one purpose, noble or less noble, but are inconsequent, fickle, unstable, people far less adequately equipped than many of us pass us in the race, and win the battles that we lose.

If then it be true, as all experience tells, that the reasons of human failure are to be sought in most cases, not in accidental circumstances which we call Providence but in character—not outside of us but within—we need not draw pessimistic conclusions about the government of the world from the facts of life. Rather let comforting reflections come from these considerations to one who looks back on success and failure in the light of these facts.

There is comfort for the slow, the insignificant, the dull—if only they be dutiful. The world will never emerge, and ought never to emerge, from its admiration of genius. But it is easy to exaggerate the service which men of genius render to their generation; it is

easy to put them, as Carlyle in his *Hero Worship* put them, in a place more commanding than they really hold. The analogy with nature is complete. The great forces of nature are not earthquakes and volcanoes and tidal waves, but the multitudinous universal push of humble irrepressible life. The greenness of the fields is caused, not by a few great trees, but by innumerable blades of grass. So, when some conquering personality has revolutionised society, as people suppose—when, for example, Napoleon dominated Europe—then, in a thousand homes, the ancient, obscure, unnoticed forces of love and freedom set to work, and they build up in quiet places a stalwart and irresistible spirit, a new all-pervasive democratic life, which no tyrant can do anything to destroy. Therefore "let us raise a monument to the faithful who are not famous, to the brave hearts who only kept the ranks unbroken and met death, but whose lives are precious as the continuity of the sunbeams is precious though some of them fall unseen and on barrenness." There could be no more rousing trumpet call than this to the great mass of mankind who are only private soldiers in the army of the Lord.

Every power we possess, beyond the ability of others, is in its degree a summons to seize the occasion for using it well. They say that no man ever became an accurate scholar, in the sense in which the word "scholarship" is technically used—in the sense in which a man like the late Professor Butcher was a scholar—unless he had begun when he was a boy. Other things may be mastered afterwards—science, for example, or philosophy—but not pure scholarship. And, strange as it may seem, a genius for friendship, if it is to be duly trained, must also serve its apprenticeship in the

"teens." These are but illustrations of the opportunities that lurk around us, half evading observation but all of them inviting the quick eye, the imaginative mind, if the race is to be nobly run, the battle fought to a victorious close.

There is good reading in the published letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie, written from India during his viceroyalty, just before the Mutiny. Lord Dalhousie was one of the biggest and wisest among the many big and wise men who have been concerned in the government of India. And this is what he wrote in the openness of his heart to a confidential friend: "You say that I have cause for thankfulness that the blessing has rested on my administration. Most true: and I am deeply, devoutly thankful. It is my belief that the blessing has so rested for four reasons. 1st, Because I have never undertaken anything which in my soul I did not believe to be honestly right; 2nd, Because when I had once resolved upon it I fought with all my human might and main to accomplish it; 3rd, Because I always wished, and I believe I seldom failed, to ask God's blessing on the fight; and 4th, Because I have never failed, publicly and privately, to give Him the glory when all was done. I know very well that I am no better than my neighbours—worse than some of them—and good for nothing at all in His pure sight. But He has said, 'Ask and ye shall receive'; and, having done so through my public life, in which with no extraordinary abilities I have gained as much reputation and honour as most men of forty-two, I feel implicit faith in that Refuge. . . . I have never spent a sleepless night from public cares during the six years that I have governed this Empire. Thank God for that, too." Those words, written with no thought

of publicity, are an expression of the true spirit in which one should face the tasks of life.

Life and the Sacraments. — Life begins with the unconscious and involuntary. With a heredity for which he is not responsible, into surroundings and a home of which he has no choice, the child is born—a being nourished, guided, ruled by others. For some time at least his conduct and character are so little of his deciding that he cannot fairly be praised or blamed. His conduct is to his parents' credit or their fault, or it belongs to that large scheme of things which, when we see clearly, we call Providence and God's Will. That, of course, is plain. But it is not always noticed or believed that the unconscious part of life—that which comes without our knowledge or our choice—lasts far beyond the years of childhood. When a man fairly sets himself to ask what proportion of his activity is the result of thought and Will, how much every day he really decides, and how much is involuntary or outside his power, he is astonished to see how ninety per cent at least of his life is automatic or accidental or the result of other people's actions, or in some way not the product of his mind and Will.

It is a remarkable thought as it grows upon one that so much of an intelligent and self-governing being's life is not intelligent or self-governed. A great part of every twenty-four hours is spent in sleep; and a greater proportion still of the remaining day is occupied with tasks in which we are either unconscious or involuntary tools. Even when we set ourselves to consider how far we are really responsible for the chief decisive events of life where Will would seem to have been most active, the share of our reason and

choice begins to dwindle. The calling in life, for example, which we took for our own, the profession or trade we follow, is far more often ours because we drifted into it, under the influence of old associations or the example of our friends and companions, than because we deliberately decided that in such a way and no other we should shape our career. And marriage, which more than anything else on earth affects a man's bent and character and moulds him for good or ill, is in most cases the result of a chance meeting, of an acquaintanceship at first undesigned, and of a hundred circumstances outside his own power. Great truths inform and transfigure a man's life ; but we do not generally seek out the great truths. They come to us. And love, which makes the whole world different, is not sought after and won by a struggle, but dawns like the day upon the heart—as gracious and undeserved. And then last—but surely greatest—" By grace are we saved " and not by works. To the very highest gifts in life the mind and Will can lay no claim.

This thought, whose illustration is manifold, is one which should fasten upon the mind. We do not know ourselves as we ought till we see that ninety per cent of our life is unconscious and involuntary and beyond our choice. A true religion has its root in a right recognition of this truth.

Yet there are forces working against it. In our country there are at least two tendencies towards over-exaltation of the place of the Will and a forgetfulness of the vast preponderance of the involuntary in life.

(*a*) There is for one thing a most certain decay in our traditional Calvinism. To the great theologian of Geneva—whom Knox and the Scotsmen followed—

God's sovereignty was everything. A place for man's freedom could hardly be found. Whatever were the movements which on his narrow sphere man might make, the great determining cause of things was in other hands. The one Rule was the authority of the King. It need not be denied that the love of the Father was by such teaching obscured, and a hard view of God and a sullen, uninspiring view of man were almost necessarily trained. But as Calvinism decays, and that great thought of God's sovereignty wanes from our minds, there is a risk lest self-dependence should unduly grow, and the elemental facts of life—the involuntariness of ninety parts out of the hundred of its content —should be neglected or too little realised.

(*b*) A remarkable social change of our time has had a similar influence — the altered position of woman. For generations that sex—the half of the human race —had constant practical experience of the meaning of life without choice. Not the great events of human destiny only, but even its details were ordered for women : and for most things they had to wait. Out of this dependence, it can hardly be doubted, grew some part of their piety, and because they had learned how small a part Will played in their life they learned also the habit of faith. It is impossible to say how much the race has been indebted for its religion to that part of it which had seen most clearly the narrow range within which life is self-determined, and how dependent a human being is. But the social system has given an ever-increasing enfranchisement to women ; their life is so much more free and so much more their own, and there is a risk lest faith should suffer, and its great teachers themselves should forget its worth. The improved position of women is a change with which every

Christian man must sympathise. But it is useless to neglect its dangers. That would be a serious peril if the human soul were to lose the object-lesson women gave, that all destiny is not in its own hands ; if anything should make our fellow-creatures forget how small is their part in the rule of the world, and even in the rule of that little world which is in their own hearts and lives.

To realise this truth—that ninety parts out of the hundred in our life are not decided by ourselves—is the first step in religion. But that were little if that were all—if religion on its part had no message of consecration for this great field of human activity for which man himself cannot care. Our faith comes to us in its most gracious mien when we see the Father take into His own hands that which we are too ignorant, too blind, too weak, ourselves to guide. This is what Baptism means. At the beginning of the Christian life that holy Sacrament stands with outstretched hands to receive and bless. Before the child knows anything about God, the merciful Father has claimed him for His own. The poor, helpless, thoughtless infant—the most helpless creature under heaven—is welcomed to the Kingdom of the Lord, and that unconscious being of his is dedicated to the Saviour, who loves him then without love in return, and will love him always even when he is heedless and wayward and neither loving nor thinking of Him. There is no more beautiful meaning in Baptism than this—that our unconscious life has been consecrated to God from the first and that He has received it and guides and blesses it, and that what we know not, and will not, the Father knows and wills. Thus Baptism is no mere reminiscence of childhood, to be superseded by a nobler

Sacrament when we come to graver years. Now, as at the first, it is the dedication to the Father of that life which cannot guide itself; now, as at the first, it is the assurance that Love is over all, not dependent on our narrow wisdom, not waiting for the feeble strivings of our Will. Love is over our life when we know it not, and live as the creatures do by impulse and momentary appetite and are the slaves of chance and custom. Love has not forgotten us even when we forget the Lord of Love. That is the sacred meaning of the life of the baptized. The baptized have been by the Blessed Sacrament committed to the Father's care; and He will not forsake His own.

An utterly different side of life is presented by the Holy Communion. As the Lord was made known to the disciples at Emmaus in the breaking of bread, the Sacrament of the Eucharist is the consecration of knowledge and will. The very name Communion speaks of a passage of the mind out of that world of habit and mechanical action in which we are at one with the nature of things around us, and an entrance into the conscious fellowship of mind with mind. St. Paul has carefully set the intellectual exercise of self-examination as the road to the Table of the Lord. When the soul realises itself and discerns the Lord's body from common things, then does it worthily partake of the second great mystery of the Church. Just as Baptism is God's consecration of the unconscious life, the Holy Communion is the gift He offers to the mind that knows and wills. It may be only a smaller part of life that can be so described — ten parts out of the hundred — but who shall say that vastest issues do not depend upon the decisions that we make with open eyes and reasoned thoughtfulness — the deliberate

choices of the Will? However freedom is to be explained, if there is not an absurd series of motives and decisions involved in every choice, there must be something at the back of Will, a personality, a substance of the Will, which creates as God Himself creates, and acts as a being made in the divine image should. Every day we stand before the need of such decisions; many a time in life issues of vital moment depend upon choice; and there can be no more solemn need for the soul than that this Will-power, this personality at the back of Will, should be in communion with the highest—near in thought and sympathy to that great moral force of the universe which we call the Will of God. Thus our voluntary life presents itself to religion and craves its consecration. And the Holy Communion is the answer. There is no use in excluding from it its proportion of mere emotion; but essentially the Sacrament is the relation of the mind of Christ to the thinking mind of man. All undue mysticism, all merely unintellectual awe, must be checked when we remember that the Lord is made known to us in the breaking of bread. The Sacrament takes on its highest aspect when we see the soul rising out of its atmosphere of mere sensation and custom and conventional thought, and consciously beholding face to face the Lord of its higher life, and there in His presence offering before Him the sacrifice of its free activity.

> Our wills are ours, we know not how,
> Our wills are ours to make them Thine.

The goal of the Christian's faith is reached when will and no-will, knowledge and no-knowledge, the life which is merely organic and mechanical and the life which the reason guides, are all alike presented to God

for consecration, all alike informed with His presence and made servants in His Kingdom of Holiness for the hastening of His Kingdom of glory.

The relation of the two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, to one another is thus determined. The one does not stand in thought before the other, though it must always come before it in time. The one is no mere avenue or gateway leading into the more solemn sanctuary which the other offers to the soul. They last through life together. Just as the habitual and automatic in our being is for ever emerging into consciousness, and the voluntary for ever sinking back into reflex-action and habit, so closely are the two Sacraments in which they find their consecration united to one another in the life of faith. Without the jargon of the "New Psychologists," we know that two golden chains bind us to the heart of God. Of the two that is not the less precious, its links must not be the less secure, which holds us to Him even when we know it not. And when the Lord is known to us in the breaking of bread, we must not forget that He was with us also when our "eyes were holden." Even in our ignorance and self-absorption the Lord was still walking by our side.

The Help of Prayer.—Only the Searcher of hearts can tell how many have given up the habit of "saying their prayers." But those who have done so might well think of two reasons that should give them pause. One is the command of our Lord, and the other is His example.

His command comes to believing Christians with an altogether unique force as that of the blessed Son of God. But, even if a man had doubts concerning

our Lord's divinity, there would yet be an unparalleled authority in His command. For there is no doubt concerning the place of Jesus among the Masters of the mind. Far more than Galileo or Darwin was in the realm of scientific generalisations, Jesus was a discoverer, a reformer, a teacher in the things of the soul. That man refuses the counsels of Him who knew the spiritual world the best when he disobeys His instruction that men ought always to pray.

The duty is equally imperative when one turns to Christ's example. Whatever view we take of the theological dogmas about Christ's person, there is no doubt at all concerning the supreme and unequalled beauty of His life. And, such as His life was, it was a life of prayer. If one opens the Gospel story at almost any page, one reads of His turning to the Father in communion and love. If there be any force at all in the old argument of the logicians, which they call the argument *a fortiori*, it surely is relevant here. If Jesus the sinless Son of Man needed to seek the help of God, how much more must we ?

One knows, however, that there are reasons which, especially in later years, have somewhat hindered the practice of prayer; and something should be said about them.

There was a book published in the eighteenth century with the astounding title, *The Existence of God Mathematically Demonstrated*. In our time we have learned to set less store by such kinds of proof where spiritual matters are concerned. Mathematics and logic have their place. But it is with subtler instruments that the human spirit has reached the faiths which give it peace. What is called " proof " has little reference to the holy mystery, the devout practice of prayer.

It is doubtful, indeed, if much light can be cast upon the intellectual difficulties with which the act of prayer is surrounded by any of the speculations and defences which seek to make it plain.

The widely diffused knowledge of science, or rather, perhaps, of the belief that lies at the basis of science—the uniformity of natural laws—has led many to feel less confidence in the value of prayer. There is no use in praying to a natural law. If one has no other conception of the Force that is at the back of things than that it is a blind, impersonal, unemotional destiny, then one might as well pray to the Multiplication Table as to it. But if the conviction has grown and fastened upon our minds that there is Intelligence, and not Intelligence only, but Benevolence, in the scheme of things; if, in short, we can say with any measure of faith, "Our Father, which art in Heaven," then the uniformity of nature, the regularity of law, is no longer a discouragement to prayer; it is a real invitation to it. For who is the earthly father to whom his child goes most readily with his request? It is not the fickle, inconstant man about whom one can never be sure what he will do; it is the parent whose steadfast affection and stable judgement have inspired respect as well as love, and to whom a child can go with that expectancy without which there cannot be a real desire—the expectancy that, if he can, he will satisfy his wants. In just the same way, the regular habits of God, which we call laws, have inspired in us a belief in His constant and unwavering care; and His children can go to Him, not as to some fickle and light-minded potentate—to-day complacent, to-morrow in a rage—but as to the strong sure refuge of their souls.

Another reason is perhaps more potent in restraining prayer — a sense of our own weakness, and of our narrow judgement. Is it not presumption for us, we ask, to venture to seek any blessing from the Almighty and All-wise ? What do we know of the purpose of our life, or of its complicated issues, that we should interpose our desires between the Omniscient Ruler and His designs ? That seems a specious reason against prayer ; but it also vanishes at the touch of the words, " Our Father." A father's love takes no account of the size or wisdom or, indeed, of the goodness of the one it loves. Does a father refuse to hear his child because it is foolish, ignorant, peevish, petulant ? Do not the strong loving hands take it up with all the greater and more protective care because it needs so much to be taught and disciplined and subdued ? " Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him "—not because they are paragons of virtue, but just because they are His children. Thus does our Father's love appeal to us most plainly when we see Him as the God of the frail—moved to hear us, not because we are important, heroic, wise, but just because we are so pitifully small. Not infrequently one has seen a strong man with his little child in his arms, and has known that he would have fulfilled her lightest wish, while he was a hard enough man to the rest of the world. May we not believe that it is because our manhood is so sorrowfully little in the great Father's eyes that, therefore, He bends down to us the more tenderly, and the more pitifully hears our prayers ?

The same faith which makes us believe in prayer because God is " our Father " must chasten our thoughts into reverence by the remembrance that we

are children. The children cannot expect to have a right to rule in any home. The children's views must necessarily be narrow and often unwise. What they ask for would often be the worst possession they could gain. It is the large outlook, the grave wisdom of the Father, that must decide the course of the children's lives.

Here lies the fundamental error of all that movement which calls itself Faith-healing or Christian Science, and so forth. Pretending that it is believing and Christian, it is really faithless and unchristian. It is not necessary to speak of those professors of sectarian speculations as impostors. But it is just to comment on the belief that disease will be healed, without human intervention, only by the prayer of faith. It is obvious that this is a faithless reflection upon the wisdom of God who has set us in a world where means are accommodated to ends, and work just as much as prayer is made a condition before the commonest blessings can be ours. There is also a foolishly one-sided idea of God's revelation of His mind, as if He had only spoken to men in the Bible, and that those who study nature by the methods of science are not as truly reading the mind of God as those who study the Scriptures by the methods of theology. Chiefly do those fanatics err by presumption. Who told them that it was always well that disease should be healed either by medicine or by prayer? Is the great household, indeed, to be governed by the caprices of its most foolish members? May not the Father have some wise reason for the chastisement which His children bear; and, though it is right that they should strive by every means to cure disease, dare they presume to say that merely for their asking it will be cured?

The reason that has done most in restraining prayer, and even in making some men stop the practice of prayer; is the sense that somehow it is useless and unpractical, a thing which idle people may perhaps pursue with profit, but which hinders much-occupied men and women from the business of their lives. It is thought of by some men as a sentiment and a luxury rather than as a work; and, if such men defend themselves at all, they take the old maxim for their excuse, "Laborare est orare"—their work for them is as good as prayer. One does not deny the value that is in that old maxim, "Laborare est orare"; for any method that allows the strong expression of our heart's desire is assuredly a form of prayer. But there is an essential confusion of thought in the notion that the fussy activities of life are "work" while the task of prayer is not. If we read an account of the prayer life of our Master, Jesus Christ, we find ourselves asking this question: "In our Lord's life on earth what were the quietest moments, and, on the other hand, what were the moments most full of effort, trouble, strife?" The natural answer would be that it was in His hour of prayer that the spirit of the Master was most at peace. But any intimate knowledge of the Gospel history would show us that it was not so. Jesus did His great works easily — almost without a gesture. He passed through hostile crowds with an air of unruffled calm. But let us watch Him at His prayers. It is then that He groaned in spirit; then that He cried, "Now is my soul troubled"; then that He was "in an agony." What is the evident conclusion from that record but that in the difficulties of daily life He moved without a struggle, because the struggle was over before; in the presence of the

Father He had faced the enemies of the soul—faced them, fought them, crushed them down, and henceforth they had no power. The man who makes prayer a work like that will find such peace. If in the secret of the soul, under the eye of God, in the morning hour, a man has seen himself, his besetting sins, the duties of the day, the people who will try his temper, the occasions he will meet for self-restraint, and, having seen himself so, goes forth to life, he will go with a calm and prepared mind, and with some measure of that self-mastery which our Lord ever showed—the battle being over before, when he said his prayer.

There are some who think that persistence and recurrence before the throne of grace are forbidden by what our Lord said concerning "vain repetition." But earnest reiteration is not "vain repetition." Our Saviour's example must be remembered. On the night of His agony it is recorded that "He went away the third time saying the same words" in prayer. There are some petitions which we cannot say too often—if we say them sincerely. It is a poor criticism upon the English Prayer Book that one sometimes hears, that the Lord's Prayer and the suffrages for the King occur too frequently. The truth is that their place in the Prayer Book is not only full of historical interest, but also has a singular depth of devotional meaning when it is rightly understood and realised. We who have so few forms of prayer should delight in retaining and using those we have.

Prayer need not always be vocal or articulate, or indeed more than a mystical lingering in the presence of the Divine. That surely is the best friend with whom we do not need to keep up a constant talk, but

with whom we can be for hours, sitting together by the fireside, walking together over country roads, delighting in each other's company, and yet, it may be, utterly silent for long.

If, then, an answer can be found for all the reasons that restrain men from prayer, shall we not try to discover from experience the help that we find from saying our prayers? Why should the good and holy practice be encouraged in all? Experience surely tells us some things:

Prayer quickens and keeps pure the conscience. If a man has given up the habit of regular prayer, he has lost a precious test and standard of conduct which nothing else makes up for. In the lower levels of life, as in the lower levels of a city, a fog is apt to gather which obscures the guiding stars. One needs to get up on the hill-tops in order to see the sky. So it is when the daily actions of life are set regularly beside the highest motives that one is rescued from much that would degrade. Many a man is stopped from an act of meanness, or of sharp practice, or of grossness, because he knows that he must say his prayers at night; though the thing will be hidden from every human eye, he cannot play the hypocrite to God. Family prayer, also, is a most testing and searching thing in this respect. The house-father knows that, as he lays his prayers before the eye of God, they are laid there in sight also of his household; and many a conscience must thus be pricked, many a man turned to keen concern that his life may in some better measure be conformed to the standard by which in the daily office of worship it is compared.

Experience also most surely testifies that the habit of prayer adds a dignity, a nobility to life which nothing

else will bring. In the biography of the late Mr. Gladstone this was the most striking feature. It is not necessary to cherish an unqualified approval of all Mr. Gladstone's actions as a statesman; but no one can read his biography without a deep and abiding impression of the magnanimity of the man. He was, as a life-long political opponent called him, "a great Christian gentleman." And this conviction is equally vivid in the mind of any reader of that book—that he drew his high-mindedness and serenity of spirit from his habits of devotion. "He went," as Dean Church once said about him, "from communion with God to the great affairs of state." That is only an illustration on the stage of a great career of the power which prayer has always exercised in lifting up a man from the level of the drudgeries, and informing the little interests of the day with the glory of the upper world.

A man is known by the company he keeps. He is formed by it as truly. And the rarest spirits have been trained by their constant fellowship with God. Newman has put this truth with his inimitable grace in an image that is as true as it is striking. "We know those who have been used to educated society from others. By their voice, accent, and language, and not only so, by their gestures and gait, by their usages, by their mode of conducting themselves, and their principles of conduct, we know well what a vast difference there is between those who have lived in good society and those who have not. What, indeed, is called 'good society' is often very worthless society. I am not speaking of it to praise it. I only mean that, as what men call refined or courtly manners are gained only by intercourse with polished circles, and as the influence of the words there used (that is, of the ideas

which those words, striking again and again on the ear, convey to the mind) extends in a most subtle way over all that men do—over the tone of their sentences, and the tone of their questions and replies, and their general bearing, and the spontaneous flow of their thoughts, and their mode of viewing things, and the general maxims or heads to which they refer them, and the motives which determine them, and their likings and dislikings, and their relative estimate of persons—so a habit of prayer, the practice of turning to God and the unseen world . . . has what may be called a natural effect in spiritualising and elevating the soul. A man is no longer what he was before. Gradually—imperceptibly to himself—he has imbibed a new set of ideas and become imbued with fresh principles. He is as one coming from king's courts with a grace, a delicacy, a dignity, a propriety, a justness of thought and taste, a clearness and firmness of principle all his own." Never more truly was described the effect of a habit of communion with God.

The company of the very good purifies the heart in strange ways, so that a man says sometimes of such a person, "I feel a better man every time I am with him." How much more true is this of our fellowship with Him in whom all perfections meet; with Him who is the infinitely good and fair. Men and women who might be mere day-labourers at their absorbing tasks in business and society: men and women whose souls might be cramped into the measure of social conventions and the petty occupations of unromantic days, are lifted out of a shallow life. The great universal heart is brought near them. To take the figure that Tennyson once used: "Prayer is like the opening of a sluice between the great ocean and our

little channels, when the great sea gathers itself together and flows in at full tide."

Experience proves that Prayer does for us still more than all this; it is the hand that moves the spiritual machinery of the world. "Who rises from prayer a better man, his prayer is answered," said George Meredith in *Richard Feverel*. But that is not a full account of prayer; there are some prayers which have only been mocked if that is their only answer. The prayer of intercession, for example, in which our desires are most unselfish and the human spirit is at its best, cannot find its satisfaction in any mere reflex benefit to the man who prays. We believe that another answer comes. When Monica, the mother of Augustine, went to an African bishop in sorrow and anxiety about her son, not yet brought to God, the good man answered her, "Woman, go in peace; it cannot be that the child of such tears shall be lost." We doubt as little that God hears our prayers for our children. They say that every particle of matter in the universe attracts, has some influence over, every other particle, so that not only does the great sun swing this earth on its orbit, but this little earth—every bit of it—has some attractive power over the vast central planet. May that not be some analogy, feeble indeed and imperfect, of the power that the prayer of our weak and stammering lips has over the spiritual forces of the world, which are the Will of God?

Such things we cannot know. But of this we are sure: the man is poorer who neglects his prayers or hurries over them—hurries because in the morning he is busy, in the evening he is tired. That man is poorer who does not "practise the presence of God" so that he is not unfamiliar there. It is the constant

letter-writer who writes most easily. It is far easier to write once a week than once a month or once a year: and some of us have known how easy it is under a strong emotion to write once a day. In the same way it is the man who prays often who finds God the nearest, and can speak to Him the most naturally, as a man speaks to his friend. It is such a man who in the trials of life finds himself the safest. A recent Baird Lecturer, Sir George Adam Smith, told in one of his valuable books an incident that impressed him greatly. He was climbing the Weisshorn above the Zermatt valley with two guides one day when a storm had been blowing. After much labour they reached the top; splintered rocks were protruding from the snow like so many summits of the Alps. Exhilarated with the thought of the view before him and with the triumph of the ascent, but unmindful of the gale that was blowing, he sprang eagerly to the topmost rock and stood erect. But the guide pulled him down: "On your knees, sir, you are not safe there except on your knees."

It is not only in the successful hours of life—high, splendid, perilous—that we need to turn to prayer. In the depression which follows achievement, and in the dull levels when the spirit would else grow mechanical and the world lose its soul of beauty—then and always there is but one safety for the soul: it is in obedience to the Blessed Lord's command that "men ought always to pray and not to faint."

It is perhaps but little that a busy man has time to say in the morning to his wife and children ere he hastens to his day's work—a few loving words to his wife, a hasty kiss to the little ones. But he knows how the words of love and the touch of the soft faces

linger in his mind all through the course of the day, and he is a better, gentler, humaner man because of the tender memory of those brief moments of the morning. So there is a dignity over life, a gravity, a charm, which come from the converse with God in the prayers we say in secret, commending ourselves for the night and the day to Him. Let no one think that the practice can be abandoned and his life suffer nothing.

Some people complain that their prayers are only formal; they say the words and cannot compass the right feelings which should accompany them. To them should be answered that the practice of devotion, like every other habit, must be trained; and if the act be done regularly, dutifully, simply, pleasure in it will come in time, and freedom in it, and a devout and childlike mind. We have in our Church too little to train us in habits of devotion. Any Roman manual would astonish us by the care it gives to methods of learning to pray. St. Ignatius Loyola, for example, enjoined that the Lord's Prayer should be said so slowly that there was time not only to make a personal reference of every petition, but also to compass the meaning of every separate word. He also advised that the Lord's Prayer should be said at one time kneeling, at another standing, at another seated, at another prostrate on the ground. By such methods, he taught, the soul was led to new intensity of understanding and desire. It may be that such rules offend us as mechanical. But no business will be successfully carried through, no attainment will be won, unless zeal is harnessed to method, and we keep our engagements when the hour of the engagement comes and not only when we feel inclined. When St. Paul bade

men "pray without ceasing," he must have had in his thought the value of a habit of devotion—a regular systematic constantly recurring act of prayer. A habit of prayer is the only way of keeping alive in our nature the sense of our dependency and a noble outlook upon life.

The sense of dependence is not a native virtue of our isles. Pelagius, the father of all such as believe in themselves, was born in Britain, and he illustrates the national mind. The English race has won its triumphs by enterprise and self-reliance and energy and belief in the victory of the brave. We are a people also prone to materialism—to near views and the fascination of the senses and the love of gain. No people of the world needs more than we the habit of prayer to teach us how little we ourselves can do, how dependent we are for almost everything. We, the "self-made" race, are the borrowers of language, civilisation, thought, religion. We are the most dependent of all peoples upon others. We need prayer to teach us this, and that all has come from God. We need prayer to make us look at the world "sub specie aeternitatis," in the light of the immortal years.

When our Lord said "Abide in Me," what did He mean? We are apt to read such familiar words and give them the scantiest clothing of real significance. And, the profounder their content, the more readily do we escape its comprehension.

Are there analogies in other human relationships which help us to understand what Jesus meant by abiding in Him?

Some great dominating leaders of the world's thought have so impressed themselves upon all subsequent generations that those generations may be said to abide

in them. Plato and Aristotle among the ancients, Hume and Darwin among men of modern times, have so turned the course of the higher thinking that they have become an integral portion of the human mind.

Great masters of the fine arts have originated schools, and their formative influence is discovered wherever the arts are practised. The Umbrian School or the Dutch School only exist because certain great men abide in their followers long after they themselves are dead and gone.

Traditions of statesmanship carry onwards the teaching or the policy of some great leader ; and it is true to say that a man like Richard Cobden abides with us, dwells in our thoughts, far more intimately than most of those who are actually alive.

Most students at a university have come through such an experience of a professor seizing hold of their imagination and furnishing their minds for ever with a whole set of ideas. It is not difficult, for example, to discover among the men who were at Glasgow University a generation ago that the teaching of Edward Caird had directed the whole framework of their thinking, and that most truly that eminent philosopher abides in them.

Within the homelier sphere of the domestic affections, there is no more common or better understood phrase than that two persons are " bound up in each other "—a husband bound up in his wife, a father in his child, a brother in his brother or sister. They live for each other, it is true ; but they also live in each other, sharing sympathies and thoughts, unconsciously for the most part, imitating each other and following a common course.

All such analogies make it clear that when Jesus said " Abide in Me " He was not counselling any unprecedented fellowship and friendship. Yet all such analogies are imperfect and fail to indicate the completeness of vital union with the Saviour which He offers and requires. Across the awful insulation of personality, Jesus can pass with a fullness of self-revelation, of which no other is capable. When He said " Abide in Me," He promised a refuge in His heart safer and more intimate than any leader or teacher or friend could offer. This is a matter of experience. It can no more be argued about than we can argue about friendship or love. It can only be known.

> The love of Jesus what it is,
> None but His loved ones know.

That is how the hymn is commonly sung ; but that is not what St. Bernard meant. The Latin words, " Expertus potest dicere, quid sit Jesum diligere " are in the active mood : " What it is to love Jesus, only those who have loved Him can tell."

If any man say " I have no guess of what it means to abide in Christ," it is impossible to tell him. All you can do is to bid him turn to some Christian saint like Bernard, and listen to what he has to tell. A hundred men and women whom we know are as able as St. Bernard to answer the question, What is your tie to Christ ? They will not, because they cannot, explain to us all that Jesus means to them ; but they will tell us this—that they love Him, that He is more to them than the nearest earthly friend, that He has done for them more than He promised to do, that if everything else in the world were stolen

from them yet they would remain rich; for Christ is theirs, and they are Christ's.

Of course, this is mysticism: there are no other terms than mystical terms to express the relation of any one spirit to another spirit, were it only the love of a man for a woman, the love of a woman for a man. But an experience is not less real because it escapes from formal terminology and cannot be precisely defined. Not a few noble experiences are of that order, and of that order is the noblest of all experiences—that which Jesus was thinking of when He said, "Abide in Me."

What results follow from such a mystical fellowship with Christ? It is easier, perhaps, to answer what results follow if a man does not abide in Christ, if a man is away from Christ.

Not infrequently we discover people of a purely secular frame, and homes where the influence of religion is hardly felt at all. At the best such people, such homes, are missing some of the finest issues; their preoccupation is with ambition or social rivalry or mere comfort. They may be successful in the material sense, but they are losing the most precious things in life—its spiritual interests and its moral enthusiasms. Even if there be no evil-doing, the home where prayer is neglected, and the Bible unread, and all religious literature a mere bugbear and bore, has a harder note, a colder atmosphere. The home misses a subtle attraction because Christ is not there. And it tends to get sadder still. About the men and women who are growing old without Christ we say—God pity them! Dreams have gone, and pleasures cloy, and the grasshopper is a burden, and desire fails; the day is lonely and the night is dark; and there is no hope Beyond.

Old age may be serenely beautiful; but it is a horrible thing to think of if a man be a stranger to Christ. This is what it means to be away from Christ, even if a man has not left the landmarks of morality, even if his life is merely secular and not positively evil.

But if a further distance from Christ be travelled, and a man has gone to the far country of the Prodigal, it is easier still to tell what he has lost—the generous admiration of goodness, the heart afire with unselfish ambitions, the tender sensitiveness, the quiet conscience, the pure imagination. All that makes man worthiest and best is gone, and he has got instead, what ?—the knowledge of evil, that only science which itself destroys the organ of science—the knowledge which is the murderer of mind. Such are the results of wandering from Christ. It follows that the responsibility of cultivating His friendship is proportioned to the issues which are involved.

What methods, then, have we for reaching a fellowship apparently so elusive and difficult to define ?

There is no recondite way. The first necessity is to get to know Christ. A famous monarch one day asked a university professor who was not a believer in our Lord's Divinity, "Professor, have you ever said to your students, 'I am the vine; you are the branches'" ? "No, sir," was the answer. "Do you think that any professor ever said that, or will ever in the future address his students in such a way ?" "No, sir," was again the answer. "Well, professor, because no teacher can or will speak as Christ spoke, I believe that Christ was not merely a man, but was divine." We do not understand Christ until we have realised that.

Moreover, not only would no ordinary teacher arro-

gate to himself such an authority; every ordinary teacher, were he a good and wise man, would think it wrong to do so. Instead of bidding his students remain at his point of view, his reach of attainment, a good and wise teacher would urge his pupils sedulously to strive to pass beyond it. We do not know Christ until we realise that in His consciousness there was the sense that finality of character had been reached, and when He bade men aim at the highest it was sufficient to say "Abide in Me." The stupendousness of the claim astounds us. But it was a just claim. Even a man like Rénan had the grace to acknowledge that "Jesus will never be surpassed." It is such knowledge of Him—gained from the Gospels and our reverent thought over the Gospels—that is our surest method of reaching a fellowship with the Master.

But not history only is our resource. It is not a Christ of the past we long to find. In the famous phrase of Brother Lawrence, we must "practise His presence"; we must resort much to Him in thought and prayer. It is not an occasional visit He seeks—not a temporary piety, a religion of once a week. It is a constant sense that He is near. Just as a man at his work at office or warehouse has the thought of wife and children latent in consciousness, and ever and anon rising into thought, and all his practical activities are wrought out against the background of home, so may the presence of Christ be with us even in our busiest hours. A preacher, striving to collect his thoughts and drive home his teaching with the skilfulest words his vocabulary can afford, has yet also, along with the supreme memory of his message, the knowledge of his audience, and the keen desire that they should hear and believe: so may a man "abide in Christ,"

knowing Him to be an august Spectator and Auditor even while every energy is absorbed in his secular calling and the insistent labours of the hour. Our Lord foretold His passage into the Unseen, where His hands could no longer be laid on sickness, and His voice no longer could be heard bidding the evil spirits disappear: "You are to be My hands," He said in effect. "Yours is the voice with which My love must speak to men." If we are failing—if we are declaring in our lives a Christian Gospel less tender and convincing than His own, it is only because we are not keeping close enough to Him. A vine branch bound with string to the parent stem—rough bark to rough bark, with no vital contact for the sap of life to run through—that is what we are, if we are merely nominal members of Christ's Church, not grafted into Him as the branch is grafted into the vine.

Christ, the Great Example

"Wherever," said Mr. Standfast in Bunyan's immortal allegory, "wherever I have seen the print of His shoe on the earth, there I have coveted to set my foot too." That is the central thought of a book greater than the *Pilgrim's Progress* and far more widely known—St. Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*. Reference has already been made to that great book in a section on *The Varieties of Religious Experience*; but no study of Our Lord's example could omit some discussion of the world-famous book which St. Thomas à Kempis wrote. Its place in literature is unique. Its hold on the affections of a multitude of devout people is greater perhaps than that of any other devotional work.

Little can be told about St. Thomas à Kempis. His

ninety-one years of life were uneventful as may be. Under an old portrait of him are written some words that fitly characterise his mind: "Everywhere I sought quiet, and found it nowhere else than in solitude and among books." Europe was seething around him into the ferment which was to make the sixteenth century the most memorable since the days of the Apostles. Yet the monk at Mount St. Agnes in Zwolle, near Amsterdam, lived in the midst of that stormy period for sixty-four years in the one quiet dwelling and died in 1471, undisturbed by any of the world's storms. Out of his sanctuary he sent down to us a book that breathes the very air of peace.

It may be that it is the fault of St. Thomas's *Imitation of Christ* that it is too peaceful. It is the low sobbing of organ music in a church at twilight that we hear rather than a bugle note sounding for the Christian war. But were it by no more than by its title *The Imitation of Christ* has been a preacher of the true faith more eloquent and convincing than any since St. Paul.

It is marvellous how little in the book is distinctively Romanist; in how little the keenest evangelical critic can find objection. The true catholicity is in it. The souls of all men pass by the same road on their way to the Saviour's soul. While anxious spirits seek rest and quieting and fellowship with the Highest, St. Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* will be—what it has been for three hundred years—the well-loved companion of the devout life: "for all time," as George Eliot said, "a lasting record of human needs and human consolation." In the book there are at least two lessons which must ever be remembered by those who would imitate Christ's example and follow in His steps.

First, the Christian life is the gaining of a spirit and not the mere copying of acts.

It has sometimes been objected to St. Thomas's book that it is utterly wanting in the historical instinct and his teaching is not rested enough upon the study of the incidents of our Saviour's life. There is none of that analysis of Christ's human life in the home, in society, as a teacher, as a philanthropist, and so forth which is the characteristic of modern thought and study about His example. Yet St. Thomas's *Imitation* is a safer guide than modern books. They forget the difference between an example and a model. We copy the outline of a model, we imitate the spirit of an example; and Christ is our example and not our model. Instead of asking, What would Jesus do were He in my place? we should ask, What, in given circumstances, would Jesus have me do? A mere imitation of the details of the Master's life has led from the earliest ages to a parody and caricature of the Christian life. Because He died a glorious martyr, men sought in the second century with greedy enthusiasm the same honour of a martyr's death, being most unlike Him in a needless death at the very moment they fancied they were following in His steps. Because Jesus had no ties of home and no property, it has been often dreamed that men followed Him closely when they took vows of celibacy and poverty and were occupied solely with religious tasks. They who most literally copied His acts most disastrously misunderstood His gracious and loving purpose.

If any one would see the wide difference between a model and an example, he could not do better than consider that wonderful sight which is seen at Rome every Eastertide, when the Pope has twelve poor

men brought near him as he sits in his throne in his glorious palace of the Vatican and ceremoniously pours water from a golden vessel over the poor men's feet. When the Pope is a good man, no fault need be found with the striking scene. But anything more unlike the spirit of Christ could not be conceived than that parade of humility which some proud prelates have made who have occupied St. Peter's chair.

There is an essay upon this subject in Archbishop Whately's book upon *Some Dangers to Christian Faith.* He shows how it is possible in trying to be like a pattern to be really most unlike it. A private citizen, for example, who would imitate a wise and good king must do so by rightly discharging the duties of a private citizen, not by assuming the demeanour and functions of a sovereign. If any Christian instructor should pretend to imitate our divine Master by teaching as with authority and not as the scribes, he would by that very procedure become unlike Him, since he would be assuming a power not really conferred by Heaven.

In the same way, there would be no excuse for ordinary people if they denounced any man as a hypocrite or a whited sepulchre: for we cannot know the heart as our Master knew it. What was right for Him would be intolerable arrogance in us.

So, also, when we think of His life in the home, we find an assurance of a self-determined will that no boy of twelve dare imitate, and in later years a separation from domestic ties that, in a self-consciousness less divinely illumined, might well be deemed hard.

It is impossible to see the example of our Saviour rightly until we know how unlike He was to us as well as how like: and then the copying of His outward

acts would seem to us as presumptuous as it would be vain.

This is the gross error of those who teach us that instead of being Christians we should try to "be Christs." The notion is as false as the language is irreverent. He calls upon us each in his place to do his best, just as in His marvellous and unique place He did His best. We may not be like Him in one condition of our outward lot. We may be rich while He was poor. We may be married, the heads of families, the leaders of a political party, the managers of a great business, while He was a poor and lonely teacher. Not a single act of our life may be the same as His. Yet the gracious spirit which moved Him may be ours; the same mind may be in us as was in Him; and we may most truly be following in His steps.

It is for this reason that à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* is a safer spiritual guide than many of the more modern "Lives of Christ," in which the detail of His human life is more fully given.

In other respects St. Thomas was nearer the spirit of the New Testament. In some memorable passages the example of Christ is given as our pattern; and in them all we are bidden to follow that which is utterly inimitable in detail of fact. When St. Paul bids the Corinthians find a pattern of liberality, it is in the Lord of Heaven who, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor. When he would teach the Philippians the humility of Jesus, and urge them to cultivate the mind that was in Him, it was not of the washing of the disciples' feet he spoke, but of the descent from highest heaven to this world of men. And when St. Peter sought the encouragement of the Lord's example for His followers, it was to His mysterious

sufferings and death upon the Cross that he pointed, to that sacrifice which none might copy but whose spirit all might find. Take from the Gospel story all that in the strictest sense is inimitable—take away the miracles, and the words such as never man spake, and the sacrificial death at Calvary, and little remains of that which we might dream of reproducing in detail. But through it all there is a spirit, a mind, a temper, which none can fail to see. Out of it all there rises an Ideal which none can fail to picture.

It may be impossible to ask, What in my place would Jesus do? The answer might well be: "Were He in your place He would instantly leave it, for His tasks were different; He came for other things." The question for us is not that, but "What would Jesus have me do? If I have His mind and would follow in His steps, what for me in my own God-given life is right?" That is the meaning of the Imitation of Christ: and St. Thomas, with his mysticism, his fellowship of spirit with the Saviour, has found that meaning better than many whose learning and whose knowledge of the geography and manners of the East and of the human life of the Lord are far greater than his own.

The profoundest lesson of the Imitation of Christ that Christians must learn is at the very root of St. Thomas à Kempis's book. Dr. Chalmers has finely said that "he proceeds on this"—namely, that we shall only follow Christ's example by Christ's power. There is no use in talking about Christ as an example until we have known Christ as a Saviour.

It will ever be a question whether the great men of the race are more of an encouragement or of a depression to their fellows. "Lives of great men all remind us we may make our lives sublime." But they give

us no help, stretch down no hands to lift us up to their serene heights ; their genius and their goodness sadden us with a sense of our hopeless inferiority. In the presence of perfect holiness, St. Peter hated himself and said to the Master : " Depart from me ; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The same truth is in the old legend about the theophanies—the appearances of God to man—that each man who had such an exalted experience died immediately. They could not see the divine and live. The sight of the Ideal may only discourage ; may only accuse and condemn. No emotion but a sense of hopelessness and sinfulness may be awaked by the sight of Jesus Christ.

Here is the fundamental error of those who turn from all that is mysterious and supernatural in the Gospel record, and say fine things about the beauty of Christ's life and His example, and would have it enough for religion to follow in the steps of the Son of Man. Fichte said that " if Christ returned to earth, it would not concern Him much if His name and person were forgotten, if only He found men enthusiastic for His cause and labouring for it." There is a specious truthfulness in the saying. But how could enthusiasm for the cause come to men's souls, how could the heart for labour be found, if the Saviour were forgotten, if the atonement He made for sin were ignored ? The ideal of life might be kept ; but men had lost its power. Every scheme that looks for Christian faithfulness from a bare imitation of the Master is wrecked on this—that the sight of His holiness appals as much as it attracts ; and unless we know that He has suffered for us to win an atonement with God, it is useless to point to His example that we should follow in His steps. " If thou didst know the whole Bible by

heart"—so wrote St. Thomas à Kempis in his first chapter—"if thou didst know the whole Bible by heart, and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would it all profit thee without the love of God and grace?"

That is the conclusion of the whole matter.

VI

THE MORAL RESULTS: THE CARDINAL VIRTUES AND THE CHRISTIAN GRACES

WHY BE GOOD?—What is the motive for goodness? Granted that the generality of mankind have made up their minds to apply the word "good" to certain actions and dispositions, what reason can be adduced for doing those actions and acquiring those dispositions? "The world," said Marcus Aurelius, "is either a welter of alternate combination and dispersion, or a unity of order and Providence. If the former, why crave to linger on in such a random medley and confusion? Why take thought for anything except the eventual 'dust to dust'? Why vex myself? Do what I will, dispersion will overtake me. But on the other alternative—I reverence, I stand steadfast, I find heart in the Power that disposes all." It may be taken as certain that, unless there is some such answer as Marcus's second alternative provides, there will be no satisfactory motive for goodness. The pleas which two great Scottish preachers urged are not satisfactory and sufficient, though they contain elements of truth.

The two greatest pulpit orators who ever preached in Scotland were Thomas Chalmers and John Caird. A passage from each of these great men may be quoted. From a curiously diverse point of view, they vindicate the worth of Goodness.

Chalmers : " Thousands of men breathe, move, and live—pass off the stage of life, are heard of no more. Why ? Because they do not a particle of good in the world, and none were blessed by them as the instrument of their redemption. Not a word they spoke could be recalled. And so they perished ; their light went out in darkness, and they were not remembered more than the insects of yesterday. Will you thus live and die ? Oh, man immortal, live for something. Do good and leave behind you a monument of virtue that the storm of time can never destroy. Write your name in kindness, love, and mercy on the hearts of thousands you may come in contact with year by year. And then your name will never be forgotten. No. Your deeds, your name will be as legible in the hearts you leave behind as the stars on the brow of evening. Good deeds will shine as the stars of heaven."

Caird : " Small indeed is the contribution which the best of us can make to the advancement of the world in knowledge and goodness. But slight though it be, if the work we do is real and noble work, it is never lost. It is taken up into, and becomes an integral part of, that immortal life to which all the good and great of the past, every wise thinker, every true and tender heart, every fair and saintly spirit has contributed, and which, never hasting, never resting, onward through the ages, is advancing to its consummation."

Both of these appeals have value. The desire to be remembered to which Chalmers appealed, the wish to rear a monument more enduring than brass, is a primitive and widespread instinct. Probably it is one of the most effective of all impulses outside the gratification of natural appetites. Yet it is manifest that it may become an incentive to crime as well as to good-

ness. An insane ambition for notoriety and fame has prompted some of the basest actions. And it has often been gratified. The author of a great mischief is often recalled, while the benevolent are forgotten. "The aspiring youth who fired the Ephesian dome outlives in fame the pious fool who built it." In any case, a mere wish for posthumous reputation is a somewhat unworthy incentive to unselfishness. It is often easier by a charitable testament to annoy one's relatives than to establish a permanent good name; and not a few great benefactors are uncharitably credited with the meaner of the two intentions. Chalmers's eloquent appeal belongs to the individualistic school of Scottish evangelicalism, whose most generous eloquence had sometimes a note of "canniness" somewhat less than Christian.

The plea for goodness which John Caird enforced is rested on the modern sense of the solidarity of society and the permanence of energy. The same plea was urged with an eloquence even loftier in George Eliot's famous verses beginning:

> O may I join the choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence.

It discovers its motive for morality in the welfare of the race. Here, according to John Stuart Mill, was a sufficient religion. And Sidgwick said that the happiness of the "innumerable multitude of sentient beings, present and to come, seems an end that satisfies our imagination by its vastness, and sustains our resolution by its comparative security."

These last words of Sidgwick, "comparative security," are not an extravagant claim for the power of

this motive. Extravagant claims cannot be made for it. Undeniably there have been lofty minds who discovered a fascination in the thought that their contribution of morality is added to the general stock of humanity's possessions a hundred years after they have perished. But lofty souls are few. Most men are inclined to say, What is the race after all that I should care to do anything for it? What is the race but a poor multitude of mortal, misshapen, sensual, light-minded beast-creatures, who will be succeeded, generation after generation, by beast-creatures, mortal, misshapen, sensual, light-minded, like themselves? What satisfaction for the imagination is there: what support for resolution is there in such a sorry crew? That point of view of the ordinary man was never better put than by Sir John Seeley in *Natural Religion*: "For a while we comfort ourselves with the notion of self-sacrifice. What matter if we pass, we say, let us work for others. But the others soon become contemptible, no less than ourselves: all human suffering hardly worth assuaging: human happiness too paltry at the best to be worth increasing."

An illustration of these arguments for goodness may be found in an incident in the life of two English men of science. Herbert Spencer revealed his own ethical standard both in formal treatises and in autobiographical disclosure. He was walking one day with Professor Huxley, and he said, "I suppose that all one can do with one's life is to make one's mark and die." "It is not necessary to make one's mark," replied Huxley; "all one need do is to give a push." The two sayings are a paraphrase of the two appeals of Chalmers and Caird. It is apparent that Huxley's answer, like Caird's adumbration of future

influence, reveals a higher plane of ethical thought than that of those who seek to "make a mark" and be remembered.

A Christian believer is under the control of motives loftier. The thought of Christ and of His Kingdom and of the souls He loved brings a warmth of passion into the desire to push on the lingering march of progress such as an agnostic, however noble, cannot know. "For My sake," said Jesus Christ; and the thought of Him grips the heart. That to-day there are thousands working for the healing of the sick and the raising of the fallen, and the cleansing of the world's foul places, and the spreading of the gospel of light, is because with all their hearts these thousands love Jesus Himself, and serve Him with a joyfulness that no abstract and visionary and dim humanitarianism could prompt.

There is a reluctance on the part of many Christian preachers to dwell on the supernatural sanctions of goodness. But that reluctance is mistaken. "Mark Rutherford" writes of one of his characters: "He has heard sermons about all sorts of supernatural subjects for thirty years and he has never once been warned against meanness; so, of course, he supposes that supernatural subjects are everything, and meanness is nothing." That is a familiar jeer. Yet there is little truth behind it. If there were no supernatural subjects to think about, there would be an end of sermons either about meanness or about any other sin: for there would no longer be any very definite motive for condemning that sin or any other. If there were no supernatural subjects to think about, the supreme and only permanent sanctions of morality were gone. It is a ludicrous inversion of the teaching of the Scripture

that minimises its assertion of a creed in the supposed interests of conduct.

The three most memorable texts of Scripture that seem to subordinate belief to character are Isaiah lviii. 6, Micah vi. 6, St. James i. 27. Some notes should be made upon the three. Isaiah, describing the worthy observance of God's law of self-discipline, begins the description by making God say, "Is not this the fast which I have chosen?" The whole of the prophet's appeal depends upon a belief in the observant over-ruling God.

Take the famous word of Micah — the noblest utterance of the Old Testament, as our Lord's gracious invitation to the weary and heavy laden is the noblest utterance of the New Testament; "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" The last clause in that sublime rule of life is as important as either of the other two. A man cannot walk humbly with his God unless he believes in the existence of God and holds certain doctrines about Him.

Then comes St. James's definition of pure religion and undefiled, to which countless hearts have responded. It is idle to ignore the clause which provides a motive for benevolence, and awes the soul to a cleanly life, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father."

Nothing could be more worthless than the specious sounding lines of Pope:

> For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
> His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

Without some sort of a creed a man's life will not

long continue to be in the right. The paradoxical utterance of Mr. G. K. Chesterton has really more knowledge of human nature behind it than Pope's couplet. "It is more important for a landlady to know about her lodger's philosophy of life than about his bank-book." The reason Mr. Chesterton gives is that a man may be very poor and yet his landlady's rent be safe. But no amount of money will protect her from a conscienceless rogue.

Such reflections upon the necessity of a supernatural sanction for morality must not be exaggerated into a claim of value for vague and useless speculation unrelated to life. An analogy from science may show the lines of relationship between theology and practical religion. If one thinks of the builder of a railway bridge, what sort of a scientific creed does one want such a man to hold? He needs to have correct beliefs on some matters, otherwise he would not be employed at all. The rule of thumb would be despised in such a business, and the haphazard which Pope advocated in matters of character would only end in disaster. But what correct beliefs is a bridge-builder expected to profess? He must know about the theory of strains, about the expansion of metals by heat, about wind pressures, and so forth. But one does not care in the least what his opinions are about the ultimate nature of matter, or Kelvin's vortex rings, and one would learn with indifference that he believed with Bishop Berkeley that matter had no objective existence at all.

The Cardinal Virtues. — The list of the four Cardinal Virtues is commonly dated from Plato and ascribed to him, though there are reasons for believ-

ing that it had received currency at a still earlier period.

The term Cardinal Virtues must be strictly interpreted as the virtues on which character hinges or turns, and not the most conspicuous virtues, or even a comprehensive list of virtues. The hinge of a door is not its most noticeable feature, nor by any means its exclusive characteristic ; but the door turns on it, and would be useless as a door without it. Many criticisms upon the list of Cardinal Virtues lose their point when this consideration is kept in view.

It must, however, be admitted that the Four Virtues chosen for enumeration, Wisdom, Temperance, Courage, and Justice, might with advantage have been more fully analysed, and that their number is hardly sufficient. Justice, for example, is the only Cardinal Virtue which represents the varied social relationships of mankind, and its meaning requires to be strained into an unusual width of content in order to include the whole sphere of public duty and private benevolence. The list of the fruits of the Spirit given in Galatians is a much more satisfactory account of social duty, though it also is deficient on the side of active contention for the right.

Wisdom.—Another criticism of the four Cardinal Virtues regards the list as erring in respect of excess. According to Socrates, and many after him, there is only one fundamental and Cardinal Virtue, namely Wisdom. In his judgement, if a man knew the secret of true welfare he would be sure to follow it, because every one wishes his own good. He taught that vice is ignorance. The blunder of bad men is that they mistake evil for good. No man is knowingly wicked.

So recent a teacher as Mr. Mackenzie uses the same language in his *Manual of Ethics*. "There is essentially," he says, "but one virtue—what we may, if we like, call practical wisdom." It is the task of such wisdom to make a right choice of the direction of life; it then becomes a subordinate, though also vitally necessary, duty to pursue that aim with a disdain of fear (that is, courage), and a mastery of sense desire (that is, temperance), and a due regard for what is fair in social relationship (that is, justice).

For this contention there is much to be said. It explains the place that has been given in many literatures, and not least in the Holy Scriptures, to the praise of Wisdom. The classical passage is the third chapter of Proverbs.

The question has been raised whether an intellectual possession such as Wisdom can be described as a virtue. Since virtue is essentially volitional, can admiration be asked for a quality which is as much a natural endowment as physical strength or beauty or an artistic temperament?

To this question the following answer should be given. So far as the faculty at the back of Wisdom is purely intellectual, it will vary in its initial quality according to accidents which cannot be described as moral, just as initial bodily strength or æsthetic taste is not essentially moral. The training and development even of the intellectual side of Wisdom, however, involves moral elements, just as the preservation and culture of the body or of any innate faculty involves moral elements. It must also be maintained that the distinguishing characteristics of wisdom are from the first moral. Wisdom must be distinguished in every stage from mere knowledge.

An acquaintance with the date of the Norman Conquest or the chemical coefficient of water is knowledge; but it has no necessary connection with Wisdom. A very learned man like King James VI. may not be a wise man: a very clever man like Oscar Wilde may not be a wise man: a very shrewd man in the affairs of life may not be a wise man, but may be like that successful farmer in our Lord's parable who is known to history as "the rich fool." Ingrafted upon a stock of intellectual strength are purely moral qualities—self-examination, love of truth, courage to face facts, scorn of deceptive and illusionary prejudices, open-mindedness and candour, thoroughness, simplicity, and childlikeness, and humility, and a hundred other graces of character. These are the real constituents of Wisdom, as distinguished from the knowledge that two and two make four, or the worldly keenness that is able to take advantage of weakness or to exploit the poor. The fullest study of the elements of Wisdom makes most evident that its place is among ethical rather than among intellectual gifts.

Wisdom may be defined as the organ that discerns right ideals. It may be given such names as moralised imagination or the vision of the good. An admirable example of its application to the highest ends is in the opening question of the Shorter Catechism—"What is the chief end of man?" "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." That question has often been contrasted with the opening question of the most popular Catechism of the Church of England—"What is your name?" And the answer: "M. or N." The superiority is real—though the value of the English question must not be underrated. By the direction of a young person's mind at once to the fact

of his personality, the practical methods of the English temperament are set on their characteristic lines. A boy sees himself as a separate entity bearing his own destiny, yet related to others in life, "Who gave you that name?" being the next question he is asked. Yet it can hardly be doubted that the Shorter Catechism sets the mind at once on a loftier level, and illuminates life with the Ideal. The task of Wisdom is to see things as they are, in their due place and proportion, and under the light of the eternal years. There is a passage in the *Paradiso* in which Dante describes the appearance of the Earth as it was seen from a point in the highest heaven. That vision of things, "sub quadam specie aeternitatis," is of the essence of Wisdom, and it is the first requirement of the Shorter Catechism. The race that is trained on such a system can hardly fail in gaining some measure of gravity of judgement and practical success in life.

In Bunyan's *Holy War* there is a character whom he called Mr. Get i' the Hundred and Lose i' the Shire. A shire is a county; a "hundred" is the name of such a division of a county as we should call a parish. What Bunyan meant by the man's long name was that a man may grasp at an advantage under his eyes—and the very fact that he had gained it would disable him from a larger ambition and a worthier success. The two notorious illustrations of such a type in Holy Scriptures are Lot and Esau. Each looked at temporary advantage, and had not Wisdom enough to calculate beyond the hour. They "got in the hundred" and "lost in the shire." It is not difficult to understand why these two Old Testament characters have been the theme of such innumerable sermons and have pointed so many morals. As often as young men have

listened to the call of momentary appetite rather than to the more distant, less insistent, but far more solemn voice of honour and duty, the same deplorable tragedy of Lot and Esau has been repeated.

Wisdom is no less valuable in the help that it brings to the passive side of life—the adjustment of the mind to failure, disappointment, and the pains of life. A copper coin placed in the eye will shut out the sun. So trouble, looked at in the near perspective, banishes from life everything but gloom. Wisdom has a larger view. "Think," said Samuel Johnson to a friend unduly worried, "how your trouble will look a hundred years hence." Paul and Silas with the irons on their wrists in a prison cell were singing merrily, for they saw the long result. Wisdom, moralised and consecrated by faith, sees our light affliction which is but for a moment in the light of holy memories and immortal hopes. The present loses half of its insistence because it shades into happy distances, and is framed by a horizon suffused with love and faith.

Wisdom serves also to dignify the daily round of occupations, and the friendship of our fellows, and the ties of home. Seen through its clear eyes, all common things gain some suggestion of the ideal, and even the bread by which we live is no longer only bread, but the sacrament of the nourishing love of God.

Wisdom is the faculty which provides a working motive for social duty. If you pry into men's hearts with the short sight of the realist you see ugly enough things. It is not worth while, you say, to spend energy or love over such unclean creatures. But Aristotle's great word is illuminative. "The true nature of a thing is what it becomes when the process of its develop-

ment is complete." It is the moralised imagination that can behold humanity as it ought to be and will be, and therefore furnishes a motive to inspire enthusiasm for the service of man. It is thus that religion helps philanthropy, and the pity which builds hospitals and endows charities is in the long run rested on a vision of the New Jerusalem, where there will be no sorrow nor sighing, nor tears, nor pain, nor death, for the time of man's crowning has come.

Such spiritual wisdom is to be distinguished from mere prudence. The Virtue which Plato called Wisdom the Romans translated into Prudence, and it is characteristic of the prevailingly practical character of the English mind that the virtue has been mainly discussed in English Ethics under that somewhat less worthy name. The climax of unworthiness is reached by the favourite argument of eighteenth-century piety, that, if Christianity is true, then it will turn out a prudent thing to have believed in it; and if it is not true it will not have mattered; we shall be none the worse. This argument is not likely to appeal to ingenuous minds, and it is far from the spirit of real Wisdom. Wisdom loves truth because it is truth. Wisdom is not scornful of anything that pretends to be truth. A sensible doctor makes a point of getting at the secret of the vogue of old wives' remedies and quacks' nostrums. If there is scientific truth there, let it be found and separated from its integuments of folly. In the same way will a wise theologian meet all heresies and vagaries of the time, not satisfied to say, for example, of Christian Science that it is as little Christian as it is scientific, but endeavouring to get at the kernel of fact which makes such a creed—at first sight so incoherent and non-

sensical—the resting-place of many good people's faith. Wisdom holds such a balance between scepticism and credulity, inclined to believe that the Christian ages cannot have been wrong in their slow working out of the Catholic faith, yet shackled by no tyranny of the past, and anxious only to see things as they are.

A very brilliant study of the Fools of the Bible was once made by Professor Paterson. It serves to throw into contrast the permanent and pre-eminent value of the Cardinal Virtue of Wisdom. According to Dr. Paterson, there are three leading types of Fool criticised and condemned in the pages of Holy Scripture.

The first he describes as the "weak fool"—weak rather than vicious—and because that type is specially in view in the Book of Proverbs, the name is given to him of Solomon's Fool. The second type, which Dr. Paterson called the Psalmist's Fool, is wicked rather than weak. The third type is represented by the Rich Farmer in the parable of St. Luke's twelfth chapter, and he may be called Our Lord's Fool. On these three types of Fool—the weak, the wicked, and the irreligious—Dr. Paterson spends an ingenious psychological study.

It is a cause for sorrow that Christian folk are thinking less of a Future Life than their forefathers used to think, and the tide of devotion has ebbed so far from the shores of another world. To the question, What is the chief end of man? a Scottish Christian would be ready to answer, with a fuller content in the words than even his ancestors put, "Man's chief end is to glorify God." But it is almost certain that he would add with less conviction, or with a belief almost evacuated of reality, "and to enjoy Him for ever." That is a distinct loss to spiritual Wisdom. For

nothing so much as a vision of the Future Life quickened the religious imagination, and helped men to look at mortal things with "larger other eyes." "Do the task that is at your hand: the next will then become easier," "One step enough for me"—such counsels are modern, and have their value. Yet the "distant scene" has also its allurement, and its place in our moral and spiritual culture will not be filled by dreary aphorisms about duty. The reaction probably came from an undue insistence on the future life and the glory that is to be. Let us hear less, men said, about the Father's house with its many rooms, and tell us more about the dwellings of the poor and the problem of the one-roomed house. Yet there is surely a medium of restrained and reverent imagination between the old effeminacies of heavenly contemplation and an utter refusal to let our thoughts pass beyond the present and the seen. This agnosticism about the future is the popular mood of the day. But it is not Wisdom. And it does not really tend to serve the practical and present-day needs which it is intended to serve. It is just the fact of experience that those who have done most for the help of the poor are those who looked to another country, even an heavenly, the reflected glory from which made the poor worth helping. The mystical believer has not been less effective than the agnostic in the practical duties of benevolence. There are more men than Richard Baxter who found their inspiration for pity and helpfulness in the contemplation of "The Saint's Everlasting Rest." St. Paul was not a weakling, nor an idler, nor unconcerned about the present and practical interests of the time he served; yet he saw it ever in the perspective of the eternal years. His mind turned familiarly to the glory that

shall be revealed. He thought and spoke of death as gain. He looked for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. And all his days were covered with the foreshadowing, or it were better called the foresplendour, of a day to be. If we ask how St. Paul was so sane and sober, seeing things in their due places and proportions, the seen and temporal as seen and temporal and yet the arena of a good fight and a well-run course, what other reason can one give than that he had in high degree the Cardinal Virtue of Wisdom ?

Can Wisdom be learned ? Most assuredly it can.

The reading of great books is one method by which such a knowledge of life and of the human heart is gained. One of the books of the Holy Scripture, not canonical indeed as Esther is, but far more valuable because more inspired, is named the book of " Wisdom," and to a whole group of the sacred writings there is sometimes given the name " The Wisdom Literature." The whole Bible merits such a name. A man who knows his Bible well may not be, in the ordinary sense of the word, a learned man or a scholar ; but he is likely to be a wise man. There are few who have not seen the marks of gravity and self-recollection and dignity in a mind which had been fed upon the Holy Scripture.

The experience of life is a training-school of Wisdom for those who are rightly exercised thereby. You may go through the world as gaping tourists pass the treasures of some fine Italian cities, and come back with no larger a store of intellectual and æsthetic learning than the knowledge that those stupid tourists gain. But the man who is an artist in life, not only

brings Wisdom to it, but every day, in its great school, learns its lesson and becomes more wise.

Perhaps the imitation of the good is one of the richest sources of acquired Wisdom, and especially the imitation of the Best—even of Jesus Christ. His own wonderful Wisdom is manifested by His knowledge of the Father's heart and His insight into the souls of men. Remember Nathanael, and Nicodemus, and the woman of Samaria, and even the enemies who testified that He knew what was in man.

Finally the Prayer Life — not the repetition at intervals of certain incantations, but the conscious and deliberate Practice of the Presence of God—is a sure source of Wisdom. "If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God." It is evident that intercourse with the All-Wise can only result in some infusion even into the feeblest spirit of some of that far-seeing, provident, and loving outlook on the world which is divine. "Can a man help," says Plato, "imitating that with which he holds reverential converse?"

TEMPERANCE.—Nothing in excess, "the Golden Mean"—this characteristic teaching of Aristotle has sometimes been described as the final word on the virtue of Temperance or Self-control. Its value may be admitted; but its reach and application are perhaps less than are apparent.

Its value may be admitted. A famous teacher of Paris was once required by Louis the Eleventh to write down the best word he had ever learned. The teacher called for a sheet of paper, and wrote in the middle of it the word "Measure." When an explanation was asked, he showed how all virtuous and religious actions, if unregulated and disproportioned, might become vices.

Not the quality of the thing but its quantity makes the difference. It was counted a severe criticism upon Aristotle when Kant said that the doctrine of "the mean" set up a purely quantitative standard for virtue. But the fact is that such a standard is in many cases the correct one.

"Resentment" is shown by Bishop Butler in his *Sermons on Human Nature* to be a generous feeling, the indication of a noble nature. If it fail by defect, it proves a man insensible to some of the tenderest claims upon humanity. But, on the other hand, it may err by excess, and degenerate into a horrible and unbridled rage.

Every man with a right sense of the gravity of life must regard its issues with a certain anxiety; less than that anxiety would be frivolity; more would be a brooding and faithless melancholy.

Even in the religious life there is a middle path which is safest. Good and well-meaning men are sometimes carried away into exaggerated interpretations of some doctrine or rule of life, until their attitude is a caricature of Christianity. Not infrequently their enthusiasm passes into an extreme of reaction, a cynical and sceptical frame, to which the teaching of Christ is even more severely opposed. Any one who has had much experience of the religious life as it is seen in churches and religious communities is jealous over its more intemperate manifestations—ritualistic prostrations and emotional mysticism on the one hand, and hard-and-dry literalism on the other.

The religion of quiet dutifulness, which asks for the old paths and walks therein, wins most the approval of such a man. If his eyes have been open, he has noticed that there may be a very mean root for much

that seems exalted, and that which masquerades as spirituality may have no nobler source than the contagion of a crowd, the unconscious sympathies of sex, or the depraved impulses of nervous disease. It is not irrelevant to the virtue of Temperance that we should exalt the Catholic faith over new theologies, and established institutions over the vagaries of the sects.

Into the intimacies of the religious life this doctrine of the avoidance of extremes penetrates with guiding power. Nobody knows of our visit to a poor man's house, our reading of a chapter by a sick man's bed, our teaching of a few children in a Sunday School class; but such duties are better for us, and a surer mark of religious principle, than the excitement of a crowded meeting or the exposure before emotional women of the queer workings of our spiritual experience, or the vanities of a *jeunesse orageuse*. It has not been common to discuss the regulation of the higher emotions under the head of Temperance; indeed, the Greek moralists only included in the subject the appetites of food and drink and sex. But a larger interpretation of the Cardinal Virtue of Temperance will find Aristotle's rule of "the mean" to be applicable to the whole range of the moral life.

A second comment upon Aristotle's doctrine of "the mean" is of still greater importance. It is manifest that he includes some degree of use of the appetites within the sphere of morals, and does not find it necessary to condemn the appetites in themselves and to plead for abstinence. If he does not indicate how much room is to be given to their gratification (and we shall presently note that this fact detracts much from the value of his doctrine of "the mean"), he regards some satisfaction of the appetites as natural

and normal. When the loose-liver asks, What are we given desires for if they are not to be gratified? he asks a question which, in normal circumstances, admits of only one answer. Room must be found within an ethical life for the exercise of every natural power and the satisfaction of every natural desire. Man must be treated as he is, and not in any idealised picture of him which sheltered philosophers may paint. Temperance is essentially a virtue of restraint and not of destruction, and it is a good man's duty to use the world as not abusing it. The errors of the ascetics who would abstain from human intercourse, from marriage, from artistic enjoyment, and from all avoidable pleasures, are chiefly these :

They inculcate an ideal which is plainly not for all mankind : the vast majority are incapable of attaining it, and, if they were, abstention from marriage would involve the extinction of the race.

If it be urged that the ascetic is only making a protest and not setting an example ; if it is maintained that such a protest in favour of solitude, simplicity of living, and consecration to a definite spiritual end is good for society, even though it is not, and could not be, imitated by all, some measure of agreement may be found with the contention. But the fatal mistake which it commits is that it sets up two standards of moral life—a higher for spiritual experts, the ascetics, in the Roman Catholic sense of the word " the religious," and a lower standard for the great mass of mankind. The inevitable result of this has been that whatever excellence is found among the exceptional few, the saints, there is apt to be developed along with it an unpleasant degree of spiritual pride ; while the mass of mankind become

well content to have their self-denial done by proxy. The Roman Catholic Church furnishes an illustration on a broad scale. Eulogising virginity and celibacy, setting high value on macerations and penances and the extreme of asceticism, that Church has always encouraged a double standard of ethical judgement. It may be freely admitted, because it is true, that the Roman Church produces more saints, more exceptionally refined and spiritual natures, than are produced by Protestantism. But few would be found to agree that its average moral level is as high as that of Protestantism. It may, therefore, be concluded that Aristotle was right when he considered the use of the appetites to be the normal course, and in ordinary circumstances found no room for abstinence under the virtue of Temperance.

This must not, however, be understood to mean that abstinence from the indulgence of an appetite is never the moral course. The opposite is the case.

Even in the most healthy systems, bodily and mental, it is sometimes useful to refrain from the gratification of this or that appetite on account of the value of the spiritual gymnastic which is thus acquired. Authorities so diverse as Newman and William James are agreed upon this point. Newman advised that when opportunities of self-discipline did not naturally present themselves they should be deliberately created, on account of their use in bracing the disposition into fortitude and self-control. William James may be quoted with a measure of agreement. He says: "Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day. That is, be systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points; do every day or two something for no other reason than that you

would rather not do it, so that when the hour of dire need draws nigh it may find you not unnerved and untrained to stand the test. Asceticism of this sort is like the insurance which a man pays on his house and goods. The tax does him no good at the time, and may possibly never bring him a return. But, if the fire does come, his having paid it will be his salvation from ruin. So with the man who has daily inured himself to habits of concentrated attention, energetic volition, and self-denial in unnecessary things; he will stand like a tower when everything rocks around him, and when his weak fellow-mortals are winnowed like chaff in the blast." This use of ascetic practices as a gymnastic of the will is attested by experience and must be recognised as valuable.

Abstinence from the use of any power, or the gratification of any appetite, may also be wise in the case of all who are abnormally constituted. If a man knows that by hereditary disposition he is endowed with desires, the satisfaction of which is dangerous because they are so strong that they may become his master, that man is well justified in their utter repression. The line of safety lies outside of Aristotle's "mean" — on the minus side. This question of Heredity has already received a separate treatment.

It is also possible that a man may be cast into an environment where the dangers of the gratification of an appetite are more than normally great. It is not unusual for a wine merchant to abstain from the use of wine, at least in his office hours. The atmosphere is pervaded with the fumes of wine; invitations to share it with customers or callers are more frequent than in other trades; and it may well be that such a man is wise in the larger sense of Temperance if he assert

his control over the lower nature by asceticism rather than by moderate use.

Society also has the right for its own protection to impose measures of asceticism in the interests of Temperance and the general welfare. It justly, by public opinion and otherwise, restricts the gratification of the sex desire within the bounds of marriage. It fixes hours at which the purchase of alcohol is possible; and it has conventions of good manners by which the desire for food, or the expression of anger, pride, or jealousy, is permitted. Within these limits the ascetic morality of abstinence is recognised to be superior to Aristotle's doctrine of "the mean."

Finally, it is not to be denied that the note of the heroic is discovered in those who abstain from the pleasures in which the multitude find delight; and it does good to a community to have in its midst a number of men who are examples of self-denial. Whether their abstinence is necessary or not for themselves or for others, they are acknowledged to be living a moralised life as distinguished from a life of careless acquiescence in desire, and the tone of the society in which they dwell is the better for them. It should be added that their personal example is often a help to other men less strongly gifted. Such men might fall into the slavery of appetites if they were left alone to combat against them, or if it was seen that nobody but the weak and abnormal was endeavouring to abstain from their gratification. The comradeship of men of firm and indisputable character gives encouragement to such strugglers. It makes their own abstinence less noticeable, and less the suggestion of an unhealthy and pitiful weakness. For this reason abstinence from this or that gratifica-

tion, innocent in itself, may promote the general level of Temperance even though it be admitted that Aristotle's doctrine of moderate use is the normal and ordinary rule for self-control.

We return to Aristotle's doctrine of " the mean " to make a third and less favourable comment upon it. Kant complained that it raised a purely arithmetical standard of morality. But Aristotle's failure was just in not giving any such definite standard. He did not indicate what the half-way-house is between Virtue and Vice : he did not name a two and a half which is the mean between zero and five. That was left to the moral instinct. The " mean " might be one and a half or it might be four, and it was only the conscience that could decide. It is evident, therefore, that his much vaunted doctrine leaves morality without any other definite guidance than in the two propositions :

The faculties and appetites were intended to have some use, abstinence not being a normal exercise of Temperance ; and

Excess or defect are both aberrations from Temperance.

The result is that we are thrown back in a discussion of Temperance upon the teaching of Plato regarding the co-ordination and discipline of the whole nature—reason being the ruler, the higher faculties the executive, and the appetites the mass of the citizens or subjects whose only duty—for Plato knew nothing of a self-governing modern state—is to obey. The conquest of the self of natural sensibility by the rational self is Temperance.

Temperance is most frequently thought of in a negative way. But this is a mistake.

Manifestly the negative aspects are those which first

emerge. The sensibilities are the earliest stages of conscious life. Appetite awakes before reason. The great fundamental desires obtrude themselves almost as soon as consciousness comes. A child is for ever wanting to have desires gratified, and has practically no inhibition of the Will. Throughout life these appetites (made more powerful by adolescence) are the primary factors with which reason has to deal. The first duty of Temperance, therefore, is negative, is of the nature of restraint. (*a*) This applies generally to all the appetites. But as a matter of common experience the main struggle of life is with one or two appetites. (*b*) This applies to all men. But as a matter of experience it applies to some men in intensely greater degree than to some others. There is a profound truth of human nature in the reply of a certain minister to a parishioner who asked him to control his temper, "I control more temper in five minutes than you control in a week." (*c*) This applies to the varying usurpation of this or that appetite: but it is equally applicable to the man who has every appetite but one under control, but is the slave of that one. Not infrequently a man absorbed by one passion is able to be indifferent or contemptuous of the other allurements of the senses by which his fellows are betrayed. That is no proof of self-control. A miser is careless of food and drink, and cold to the temptations of sex; but no one would on that account call him a Temperate man; he is the bond slave of avarice, one of the most ignoble of all human desires.

Though Temperance has usually been discussed from the point of view of Restraint, its alliance is equally with Culture.

The conflict between the two relations to life of

Culture and Restraint was made familiar to English-speaking people by Matthew Arnold's distinction between Hellenism and Hebraism—the characteristic attitudes of the Greek and the Hebrew mind. Though the discussion tended in his hands to become academic, and though he made insufficient allowance for the restraint elements in Hellenism and the culture elements in Hebraism, the ideas at the root of Arnold's contentions are of the deepest interest for religion and morality.

If one has looked at the picture of a saint in the stained-glass window of a church, one has been tempted to ask, Is that really the type of character which is admirable? Macerated, haggard, with strained and pathetic face, the saint stands tranquilly gazing up into heaven. We compare him with the best men we have known—well-read, keenly interested in human life, genial of countenance, soft-lipped, kind-eyed, humorous. Which of them was most a man? Or we see a nun's face under her hood—white as death, demure, devout, with the seal of self-surrender marked deep upon it. We know that she is a good woman. But we compare her with another woman we have known in a happy home—broad-bosomed, bustling, full of domestic interests and hospitalities, a kind and tender and happy wife and mother—which of them is most a woman? Is it culture or restraint that has made the finer type of human character? Such considerations, drawn from familiar experience, are enough to convince us that Temperance is inadequately advocated when it is only regarded as the denial of impulse. Its real office in human character is in the regulated development of all the normal and natural appetencies, desires, emotions, and intellectual and moral instincts

of the nature. The positive methods of Temperance, or what is sometimes called Gospel Temperance, command most respect.

The supreme illustration of Temperance is found in the life of our Lord Himself. Hellenism and Hebraism, Culture and Restraint, find in Him their reconciliation.

This is often denied by extremists. Some read His life as that of an ascetic, the foe, or at least the uninterested spectator, of all that is known as culture. The most popular religious art shows Him as the Man of Sorrows. Pathos, patience, pain — all that makes up the ideal of the suffering Messiah are in that pale face. A crown of thorns is on His head. His body is covered with blood. The Roman Church especially has concentrated her thought upon our Master as preoccupied only with that one aspect of human life which may be called negative. He is not the man of Temperance but the man of an extreme asceticism, the Man of Sorrows. The result is that the question is often asked, Can Christ then be really an ideal for us : is He a complete ideal ? Is it true that He took no interest in much with which our minds must be filled, and that He deliberately turned aside from fields of human activity to which the majority of men are called ? Marriage, politics, art, literature, science—were those great and sacred concerns alien to Him ? If they were, how can He—with interests so restricted and incomplete—be an example to follow ? This question is vividly presented by the consideration of such a study of His example as à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*. The setting forth of humility, simplicity, purity in that book is of imperishable worth. But St. Thomas à Kempis was almost entirely ignorant of the historical method, and he had nothing to say of

spheres of beneficent and purposeful activity. Afraid of the large arena of human intercourse, he shut himself up within a recluse's piety, quoting with approval the cowardly saying of Seneca, "Whenever I have gone among men I have returned home less of a man." If that is the "Imitation of Christ" there is something in us—it is the Hellenic spirit—which says that a bloodless, tame, inadequate life is thus described. There must be fields of service less restricted, and a development of our nature more generous, genial, and free. But à Kempis had not recognised the aspects of our Lord which are not ascetic.

If one reads the Gospels with an unprejudiced eye, there are many signs that our Lord's mind was sympathetic with the Hellenic frame. A recent writer has made an attempt to maintain that, being a child of Galilee of the Gentiles, Jesus may have had some Greek blood in His veins. Of that there is no convincing proof. But the fact that such an attempt at proof should be made suggests that there are elements in our Lord's character which ally Him as much to humanism as to asceticism, as much to the Hellenic as to the Hebraic temperament.

Of course, there were spheres of human activity on which our Lord did not emerge. All usefulness begins with limitation. Temperance itself is just another name for limitation. If one is to be a scholar, one must abandon the open life of an agriculturist. If one is to be a lawyer, there are a hundred sacrifices of taste and inclination which the profession will demand. That our Lord's example cannot be quoted in detail for some incidents of our human career—for the virtues of the married life or for old age—is no suggestion of His being an inadequate or incomplete ideal. On

the other hand, there are a hundred indications that His interests were not bound within the narrow circles to which some people imagine that they were confined. If He says nothing about Art or Science, there is no question of His care for beautiful things, or His single-eyed devotion to truth. To this day an artist or man of science would tell us that the starting-point for supreme achievement within his sphere is the child-like mind that Jesus taught—the mind which comes to Nature without preoccupation, ready to see and own what Nature has to teach. The longer one studies the Gospels the more one wonders at those who describe Jesus as merely Hebraic, with the ascetic nature, the narrow ethical interests of His race. "Never surely did a religious hero shun so little the joys of life"—was the judgement of Hase. Strauss owned that "this joyous continuous conduct of a lovely soul may be described as the Hellenic element in the mind of Jesus." The freedom which He asserted, his emancipation from tradition and ritual, the intellectual originality with which He presented the commonplaces of experience and religion, are enough to rescue His example from a charge of being limited within His nationality and inadequate for modern times and Western ways.

If, then, we are asked: "In the struggle between the Greek and the Hebrew spirit, between culture and restraint, which side does Jesus take?" the answer is not difficult. He followed "the mean." He was the supreme example of Temperance. In this large humanity the conflict between the two temperaments ceased, being merged in the unity of a commanding purpose and service. He was not in love with self-denial for its own sake: He was not aiming at self-

development for its own sake. His one thought was to do the Father's will. It is plain that He was not afraid of moral surgery, and He counselled the plucking out of the offending eye and the cutting off of the offending hand. Yet one feels that He recognised that surgery is not a normal necessity of life, and He had no praise for mere suffering without an unselfish moral end. His message for to-day is this: When, on the one hand, they tell you of the duty of self-control and preach a hundred abstinences, and on the other bid you "be yourself" and "live your life," the Lord Jesus comes with a nobler message than either. He gives as the essence of moral sentiment, "Love and then do what you like"; and as the essence of moral conduct, "Serve God and man and think little about yourself." His own three temptations in the Wilderness are the supreme example of Temperance — that rule of the lower nature by the higher which Plato had, four hundred years before, declared to be the ideal for human life.

It does not, of course, require to be said that the limitation of the virtue of Temperance to sobriety in the use of intoxicating drinks has no warrant in Scripture nor in ethical teaching. The problem of drunkenness has always been an anxious one. But in ancient times the liquid which they called wine, a thick and viscous fluid, seems to preclude the notion that it was often drunk in excess. It was not till late in the seventeenth century that distilled beverages became common in England: we hear of them first in 1629. But ever since that time the habits of the people in regard to alcoholic drink have become a matter of serious concern. Had the Apostles known

of the conditions of modern industrial life, their counsels regarding Temperance might have had a more direct reference to the dangers involved in the practice of consuming such liquids. Without entering upon the question of the permissibility of such gratification, a teacher of Temperance might legitimately urge the following considerations :

No very young person should use alcoholic beverages. It is a wise course for a parent to ask his son or daughter not to touch such drinks until, at least, the age of twenty-one.

The practice of self-denial in other respects should fortify the will against over-indulgence in this sense-gratification. From early childhood young people should be taught the lesson of "doing without." Perhaps John Locke was right when he said that an honest farm-house was the best place for a child to be brought up in. He meant that there was plenty of plain food there, and open air, and exercise : but no luxury or artificiality. Temperance finds there a natural home.

If alcoholic beverages are used at all, it should be with frequent intervals of abstinence so that the habit should not be inveterate and uncontrollable. Those intervals should be long enough to secure complete immunity. "Mark Rutherford" tried the practice of drinking no alcohol till the last thing at night, and he found that the day became a long anticipation of the satisfaction of the evening hour. Others have confirmed this, and have assured us that such an interval of abstinence is too short. A period such as Lent every year is wisely kept by a complete cessation of alcoholic liquor. The Protestant Church has lost much by withdrawing the sanction of religion

from what is often a physiological necessity and a plain moral duty.

Whatever one's personal habits are in those respects, it is incumbent upon one to give no sanction to the unnecessary introduction of such indulgences, and, above all, never to teach their use to the young or to urge it upon the reluctant. To his own conscience a man stands or falls. But let it be a matter of conscience and not of easy and random action.

The final word about Temperance may be stated in the old maxim : " Be a person and respect others as persons."

Courage. — In his *Manual of Ethics* Mr. J. S. Mackenzie went so far as to say: "The Greek virtue of Courage, confined almost entirely to valour in battle, has but little correspondence to anything that is supremely important in modern life."

The first edition of Mackenzie's *Manual of Ethics* was published in 1892. It would hardly be maintained that martial Courage had little correspondence to anything that was " supremely important " in the years between 1914 and 1918. The truth is that the crude and elemental conditions of human life may be temporarily modified in form, but they constantly reassert themselves, and the most developed civilisations are always subject to the risk of confronting in their barest forms the most primary condition. It will hardly be denied that the possession of Courage in the simplest Greek sense of the word was in the years of the Great War the pre-requisite for the maintenance of any advantages which civilisation has secured. The manifestation of this virtue on so broad a stage, in so clear a light, serves to suggest that even in its most

primitive guise Courage retains at all times its place as one of the Cardinal Virtues on which the issues of character and national destiny depend.

It may be usefully asked whether Christianity has had any share in the protection and cultivation of this virtue. The arms of our soldiers were blessed by the Church ; their banners hang within sacred walls ; and prayers were offered for their victory. Is that the characteristic attitude of Christian religion to martial valour ?

The Courage of Jesus Christ Himself will not be doubted. He rested quietly in a boat at sea even when professional fishermen were alarmed about their safety. He passed without a tremor through dangerous and angry crowds of His enemies. He met with an undisturbed mien the gibbering maniac from the tombs. He moved with resolute calm upon His mission, though there was always around Him that sense of impending calamity which is far more difficult to bear than ascertained and definable risk, and which has often broken down the nerves of powerful men. Finally, at the crisis of His career, He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, though it was with the knowledge that He was to die. This subject of Christ's Courage is one which deserves more study than has been given to it. Admirable suggestions regarding it may be found in an old book — the late Thomas Hughes's book on *The Manliness of Jesus.*

A study of the conduct of His disciples reaches results which, at first sight at least, seem less satisfactory. Christ knew that He could not rely on their Courage, and said, " Ye shall leave Me alone "—a forecast justified by the record of His day of trial when " they all forsook Him and fled." The motives of the

disciples have been much canvassed, and a better course for them has often been indicated. In some well-known lines George Eliot gave her verdict on them :

> The saints were cowards that they did not die
> With Christ : the noblest death to die for love
> Greater than sways the courses of the world.

The disciples themselves at their better moments perceived that ideal conduct might demand such a sacrifice from them. " Let us also go," said St. Thomas, when he learned that His Master was to face His adversaries, " that we may die with Him." And St. Peter, when his better nature was uppermost, protested, " Though I should die with Thee yet will I not deny Thee." And, if they had gone with Him and died with Him, owning their loyalty to the last, they would have earned a lasting fame ; and God who buries His workmen and carries on the work would not have left the Church to fail. Short of dying with Him, the disciples at least might have done something more to defend Him. Twelve strong and resolute men were no contemptible bodyguard ; and it has often been suggested that, if they had not been cowards, they might have done much to protect or even to deliver Him. A character-study of the disciples on these lines might lead to fruitful results. Students are referred to the relevant chapter in Bruce's *Training of the Twelve*—the best book, as it was the earliest, of that great theologian. Bruce's defence of the disciples, however, cannot be said to be effective or conclusive. One could hardly imagine a defence that would remove from an imaginative mind the picture of St. Peter following the Lord afar off—lingering after the arresting party, hiding behind trees, making himself

small in the angle of doorways, while he should have been with his Master, the gyves on his wrists, but the pulse of manhood beating high within an indomitable breast.

Yet the after history of the disciples and our knowledge of their simple and honest characters make it impossible to dismiss them with George Eliot's brief note of condemnation, "The saints were cowards."

They were obeying their Lord's wishes in not defending Him. He had expressly asked their lives. "I have told you that I am Jesus of Nazareth: if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way." At this period of their comradeship and service they had learned instinctively to discover their Master's mind, and such words of His would convey to them clearly that He had other purposes for them than to be fellow-martyrs with Him. A soldier's Courage is not doubted when he retreats at his officer's command, yielding up the opportunity of joining in a forward charge because larger interests of which he is not capable to judge require the preservation of his life for the time.

Besides such implicit orders, there was the Lord's own explicit rebuke of St. Peter, when in a furious impulse he attacked Malchus, "Put up thy sword into its sheath, for they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." Unless we are to maintain that disobedience is better than obedience to Christ, merely because disobedience would have a show of gallantry, it is not fair to charge the disciples with cowardice.

Moreover, they would have been curiously dull and unspiritual men if the Lord's own methods had made no impression upon them, and they had not guessed how irrelevant and incongruous physical force would be in His sublime hour. They knew the Master's

resources well enough to understand what He meant by the possible "legions of angels" that were there for the summoning; and they realised how foolish they would be to intrude a rough and tumbling struggle into this hour and power of darkness. The awe of the Master was on them, and they could not help leaving Him alone. They felt how little He needed them, how little they could do for Him. Perhaps we should respect them most when they seemed the least worthy of respect.

Whether or not such a defence of the Courage of the disciples is adequate, it must be admitted that they gave no illustrious example of martial valour. The first ages of the Church were as little propitious for the development of this virtue. A "Christian soldier" might have seemed then an impossible collocation of terms, except when applied (as by St. Paul in his letter to St. Timothy) to a purely spiritual conflict. A Christian could hardly bear arms in the service of the Roman Empire. There are abundant indications in the Fathers that the profession of arms was not a tolerable profession for a follower of Jesus Christ. In consequence, it need not be denied that Courage in the active sense of martial valour was not stimulated by early Christianity, and is perhaps to be traced to the period of the Middle Ages.

Before passing from the subject of that physical courage which is most clearly displayed by soldiers and sailors it should be again reiterated that it is of permanent value for every community. It is possible that the fear of pain has become a stronger force in modern times by the introduction of chloroform and other anæsthetics. And the prevalent ease and luxury have done something also to soften the *morale*

of the country. But there can be no question that a people is not the more civilised but the less civilised because of a dread of discomfort. The vindication of all manly games is found in the discipline of facing risks with which they are associated. Adam Lindsay Gordon was right when he wrote :

> No game was ever yet worth a rap
> For a rational man to play
> Into which no accident, no mishap
> Can possibly find its way.

To those who complain to a minister of religion about the brutality of football he can well answer, " Better a dirty jersey than a dirty mind. Better the risk of a broken leg or collar-bone if a lad has learned pluck and unselfishness, and an alert judgement, and a chivalrous temper, and all the fine elements of Courage which manly games are well fitted to train."

Courage in another sense, that of Fortitude, was abundantly exemplified from the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic time. Fortitude is the passive rather than the active side of Courage. It bears pain rather than goes to risk it ; it bows to the inevitable rather than carves out a destiny for itself. The question is sometimes raised, Which is the finer type of Courage ?

On the one hand, it is maintained that Fortitude is the finer type of Courage. A man is bearing pain or calamity with a stout heart. He has no hope of escaping it by good luck, and has none of the excitement of risk. The burden is on him, and he has to bear it like a man. Moreover, the man of active Courage has to some extent the direction of his own activities, and can lean upon the consciousness of his own skill. While the man who only endures must to a great extent be

the helpless recipient of what is done for him or to him by others. It is one thing to hold the management of life in our own hands, and quite another thing to be helpless in other hands.

A case may, however, be made out for the superiority of the more active type of Courage which we call valour—so long as it is not mere recklessness, but a gallant spirit throwing itself into a worthy cause. To submit to the inevitable gracefully is, after all, the exercise of a humble measure of common sense. What cannot be cured must be endured. But to sacrifice ease and comfort willingly, to face danger or death with a gallant spirit, not because it cannot be helped, but because a generous heroism calls—that seems a loftier and more admirable virtue. At least it is nearer to the common heart. The valour of a soldier or sailor touches finer chords than the uncomplaining patience with which a sufferer from cancer meets his horrible pain.

Whatever decision is reached regarding the relative merits of those two forms of Courage, it will hardly be denied that they are clearly distinguishable forms of the Cardinal Virtue; so much so that they can hardly be described as the same virtue. They do not always appear together; or, if they do appear together, they rarely occur in the same proportions. A very brave man may be a poor patient in a hospital; while some very calm and resigned sufferers would not have the initiative that would lead them voluntarily to encounter danger. Roughly speaking, active valour is the virtue of a man, passive endurance the virtue of a woman—though there have been multitudes of cases where such a general judgement has been belied.

During the first centuries Courage was chiefly

exemplified by the Christian Church in the form of Fortitude or Endurance ; and the martyr rather than the reformer, the philanthropist, the assailant of tyranny was the characteristic hero of the Church.

A marked advance in civilisation is manifested by Cicero's recognition that Courage is not purely a military virtue. "The majority," he wrote, "consider that military life is superior to that of civilians. But this opinion must be confuted, for in civil affairs there are opportunities of valour even more brilliant than in war."

We find such Courage in the case of a historian like Carlyle taking up again the heavy task of rewriting his *Frederick the Great* after the MS. had been destroyed. We admire the steady, unflinching pursuit of his policy by a statesman like Pitt. We illustrate such Courage by the great Lord Shaftesbury, facing a multitude of vested interests and the opposition of those who shared his own evangelical Christianity in the interests of the poorest of the people. The highest forms of Courage can be witnessed in the simplest scenes. A man whose ambition led him to a profession abandons the desire of his heart and goes back to the farm or the shop by which his mother and sisters are supported because his duty seems to ask this sacrifice, and he has the pluck to make it. A woman gives up the offer of marriage and all a woman's natural dreams of love and home, because the care of aged parents, or the upbringing of young brothers and sisters, seems to ask this sacrifice from her, and she has the pluck to make it. No battlefield ever saw spectacle of Courage more sublime. God bless them for it, we say. Yes, God will bless them in His time. "There is no man," said our Saviour, "that hath

left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions ; and in the world to come eternal life."

It is manifest, therefore, that there are higher qualities of Courage than the merely physical and instinctive. A hundred defects of character may conspire to make a man physically brave. He may have a stolid temperament : his imagination may work so slowly that he does not realise the risks of his undertaking : false hopes may lead him on : that mechanical familiarity with the surroundings of battle which is gained by regular troops may have induced a certain callousness and disdain. The virtue of Courage is not to be despised even when manifested on this level. But it is not the highest field of its manifestation.

What may be called intellectual Courage is higher—the readiness to face truth and whatever is involved in truth, the independence of thought which refuses to be bound by catch-words if it sees fields of enquiry which demand research. A certain old woman was told about the Darwinian theory, according to which, as it was represented to her, man was descended from the apes. " I do not think that it is true," was her comment, " but if it is, let us hush it up." That kind of intellectual cowardice is very prevalent. Especially after a man's first youth he is inclined to be intellectually indolent, and to be unwilling to adjust his mind to new opinions. The Courage, which is indifferent to mere stability and permanence for its own sake, and seeks nothing better than to be sure that the ground on which it stands is the truth, is

peculiarly admirable in old men. In youth it is natural and should be normal; in age it is a sign of the grace of God.

There are certain truths of which, in modern times, people are especially afraid. They are those which concern the future. Man either is or is not immortal. If he is immortal, there either is, or is not, a state of being called Heaven and its negation. If there is a heaven, our conscious preparation for it now must be important. Yet on these questions, large and commanding as they are, multitudes simply refuse to think. Is it cowardice that hinders them? It would not be wise to fix on any one reason for this feature of the religious life of our time. But, at least, it is possible that if our Courage were stronger we should face such questions oftener and more readily.

One dislikes the phrase "moral courage" as indicative of any one type of the virtue because, of course, all Courage is to some extent moral. But the phrase has become familiar as descriptive of the quality which calls the whole executive force of the nature into the defence and support of reason. The old definition of Confucius stands: "To know what is right and fear to do it, that is cowardice." The man to whom the Cardinal Virtue Wisdom has pointed out the course of life shows the Cardinal Virtue Courage in the noblest way when he follows that course in spite of every obstacle. There are four standards of conduct constantly presented to us: (1) The way we have been accustomed to live—probably the lowest standard of all; (2) the moral atmosphere and tone of the society around us; (3) our own ideal of the way we ought to live; and (4) the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. When one

considers those standards it is apparent that Courage is not a primary virtue ; for a man might be very brave in the pursuit of any one of the four ideals. It is only when the loftiest level of conduct has been chosen that the driving power of the nature which we call Courage can send it triumphantly along the lines of the loftiest living.

Courage is the likeliest promise of success. It is the old word of Terence, " Fortuna favet fortibus " —the plucky are lucky. If only the Church and the Christian men who form the Church had more Courage the face of the world would be transformed. Dante and Milton and Goethe have done much harm by their representation of the adversary of mankind as a great wise Titanic force, a foe to fear. Rather is that representation of him true which shows him as a crawling snake : rather is that command concerning him wise, " Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Cowardice is our bane. If we had more courage we should meet all the wretched social hindrances : in church, orthodoxy ; in politics, party ; in society, fashion ; in trade, custom. We should hear unmoved the questions : Why be odd ? Why spoil good company ? Who are you that you should put yourself forward ? We should disdain the weapons of ridicule with which the unworthy fight, and the charge of " eccentricity " which is society's crime. If only we had more pluck, if only we were not cowards, we should be infinitely better men. We might even aspire—in time, after training—to be counted worthy to be called " good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

Justice.—When Aristotle came to treat of Justice in his *Ethics* he fell into an enthusiasm unusual to

him, and described Justice as more beautiful than the morning or the evening star. But, though his discussion of the virtue is profound and illuminating—in the judgement of some the most valuable in literature before Sidgwick—two comments must be made upon it, as upon all attempts to formulate a theory of Justice.

First, it is extraordinarily elusive and difficult of definition. Justice may be defined as the giving to every man his due. But what is a man's due ? A just man may be described as one who habitually respects the rights of others. But what are those rights ?

It will at once be admitted that a man has more rights than legal rights, and that Justice is a wider concept than law. The impact of law upon life is only upon a few points. The lines are familiar :

> How small of all that human hearts endure
> That part which kings or laws can cause or cure.

One needs only to reflect upon the passage of any Bill through Parliament to discover its slender relationship to the main current of our own ordinary life. At the most it adds a few shillings to our annual contribution to the State, or makes some slight restriction upon liberties we had enjoyed. But the course of normal conduct is hardly affected by it.

Moreover, law of necessity must deal in generalities, with a community and not with individuals, and can therefore be only a rough approximation to Justice as it affects each separate citizen. A law may be manifestly a fair and equal measure, considered as it applies to the State ; but it may press very unfairly on this or that person. In this respect civil law corresponds to physical law : that law also is of universal applica-

tion, and can be recognised as useful and necessary as it governs all, but each man has had his experiences of gravitation as being an unpleasant law as it affects himself. A civil law in the same way may be manifestly fair in its general application—the law, for example, that a minister's stipend vests in him on May 15 and September 29 ; but it is equally manifest that it is unfair to the family of the minister who dies on May 14 or September 28. It is the working of such detailed applications of laws, just in themselves, which has led to the aphorism *summum jus, summa injuria.*

Again, a law may permit what is morally wrong. Many people are convinced of the social and moral confusion that was introduced by the Deceased Wife's Sister Act. But it stands on the Statute Book.

Again, law takes no cognisance of some of the worst injuries that one man can inflict upon another. If you steal your neighbour's purse the law will prosecute and punish you ; but it will have nothing to say to you if you corrupt the mind of your neighbour's daughter.

Again, law itself is constantly being readjusted to moral standards.

The conclusion is that so far from Law and Justice being synonymous expressions they convey ideas at the best of enormously varied content, and at the worst may be opposed to each other.

What standard, therefore, is to be set as to what is a man's due ? We might answer by quoting the old question : Cannot a man do what he will with his own ? The answer is, Yes, legally, but No, morally. There is a social conscience that decides upon Justice with a finer instinct than a law court. It tells us that

duty remains duty even though it cannot be enforced. The landlord who evicts his tenant harshly and without excuse, the moneylender who exacts an extortionate interest from a man in his power, the rich man who squanders thousands on meaningless and vulgar luxury, the workman who in a time of national emergency wastes his time, are condemned as unjust stewards, even though they cannot be prosecuted as criminals.

It is apparent, therefore, that before Justice can be defined, a process is involved in which reason and a kind heart have place. This difficulty of definition is the first criticism upon Aristotle's dithyrambic enthusiasm over Justice.

The second comment is that human rights are so involved that it is impossible to declare that a man has an unequivocal claim even to the most obvious and familiar of the rights of man, Justice being an equilibrium or compromise between many of these so-called rights.

The readiest example is found in the relation of Liberty to Equality.

Justice demands freedom. That every man should be allowed to develop his personality and guide his life according to the best of his own judgement, unhampered by tyrannous restrictions, seems to be the charter of human dignity. Pæans have been sung in praise of liberty. It has been, on the whole, the guiding principle of British public life. But the evils that have been wrought in the name of liberty have become apparent. In commercial life it was the inspiration of the policy of *laissez-faire*, and that individualism whose result has been in the accumulated fortunes of a few and the exploited labours of the

many. There has been a reaction against it; and it is freely admitted that Justice demands more than liberty, and can indeed be cruelly hampered and maimed and crucified under the guise of liberty.

The reaction is to the claim of Equality under the name of Justice. All men are equal before the law, it is said and truly. All men have a right to opportunity of development, and it is unjust that any one through the accident of birth or by misfortune should be deprived of happiness and the chance of contributing to the general welfare. The main ideas at the root of this claim to equality in the name of Justice are probably the most influential forces in modern public opinion.

But some criticisms must be made upon them.

1. It is manifest that every such concession of equality is made at the expense of the other right of man, namely liberty. If John is to be given the same opportunities as Thomas, Thomas must be hindered from using the power which would have made his opportunities greater. Men are not naturally equal, and everything which tends to make them equal is a frustration of the superior capacity of the able, that is, an encroachment on liberty.

2. Though manifestly in a free state all citizens should be equal in the eyes of the law, it is equally obvious that, as long as litigation is costly, the rich man who goes to the House of Lords with a light heart is in a different position from the poor man who would tremble ere he faced the expense of a Sheriff Court.

3. The plea that all men have an equal right to life and its opportunities would seem to involve also the right to have work provided for them. It would contain, also, the right to a fair start. How is that to

be defined ? How often is it to be readjusted ? How is the equality to be maintained ? The whole subject bristles with difficulties like quills upon the fretful porcupine. It is not contended that a measure of Socialism is incompatible with the highest Justice. The point is that complete equality is incompatible with abstract liberty, and that both Liberty and Equality remain ideals, of which each must in practice surrender something if an equilibrium of Justice is to be found. The common presentation of Justice as carrying scales is in this respect a true suggestion of the counterpoise of considerations which must be effected if full Justice is to be discovered.

The same balance of conflicting interests interferes with the easy statement of Justice in regard either to individual or social action.

Has a man a right to claim his own rights ? The answer is, Certainly ; otherwise the barriers erected against injustice will be weakened ; wrongdoers will be encouraged ; the general interest of the community in the maintenance of Justice will be damaged. We are told to love our enemies. That is true ; but we do not love them when we encourage them in evil. Resistance to their exaction is in some cases the highest service we could render them ; their defeat is a triumph of Justice.

Yet, when this is admitted, other considerations must be advanced.

1. No man has a right to all his rights. If he insisted upon all his rights he would make society intolerable.

2. It is not always the best way to get your rights to insist too keenly upon them. A young minister, for example, is placed in a parish where he knows that he

has certain civil rights for the maintenance of church and manse, and, in the foolishness of a newly found assured position, he puts himself into a litigious and contentious attitude towards his heritors. The result almost invariably is that he stiffens their opposition, and finally secures far less than a reasonable and friendly and considerate frame of mind would have secured. The experience of life is that the man who is perpetually standing up for his rights is eminently unsuccessful in getting them.

3. Moreover, the attainment of our own rights may sometimes be unjust, because it is attained at the expense of the suffering of others. For example, in the financial conditions of this country during the Great War, it would have been oppressive in many cases to sue for money admittedly due, which, on account of the disturbance of trade, could only be paid at the cost of great sacrifice, even if it could be paid at all.

Justice, or the sense of fairness, has manifest applications in the whole range of social relationship.

A good text for a sermon that some minister might preach might be found in that passage in which Melchisedek is described as "first king of righteousness and afterwards king of peace." The precedence of Justice before happiness is a rule of life, ranging from the regulation of a home to the principles which underlie the doctrine of the Atonement. First Justice; afterwards quiet and orderly and settled and happy life.

Once a boy wrote from Rugby, when Archbishop Temple was Headmaster there, a letter to his father, in which a school-boy phrase was used about Temple, "The Headmaster is a beast, but he is a just beast." The letter came by an accident into Temple's hands,

and he regarded it, and rightly, as one of the finest compliments of his life. His rule was not, perhaps, overgracious ; but it was rested on fairness, on giving each his due, and it evoked respect.

First, righteousness or Justice—for the words are equally good translations of the original—that is the rule also for a home. Parents are apt to ask more from their children than they themselves were accustomed to give ; they want the period of tutelage to be prolonged beyond the term that they themselves were willing to submit to it. A father said to the schoolmaster who had charge of his son, " I wish that you could at least persuade my son to treat me as a gentleman." " Suppose," said the schoolmaster, " that you try the effect of treating him as a gentleman." That was a severe reply, but not undeserved. For authority, if it is to be honoured, must first of all be honourable, and a harsh and unfair and despotic parent must arouse a sense of injustice in his son that is the enemy of all stability and peace of home life. There are tragedies of misunderstanding in many families which arise solely from the fact that parents are asking from their children more than they have a right to ask. Happiness is impossible where a sense of injustice rankles.

The relationship of master and servant is not so close ; but it also is often injured by injustice. " I am not asking her to do more than I do myself," a mistress says about her maid. No. But she is forgetting that she gets a very different reward. The work is her own, and not another's. Moreover, she has advantages of education and training that make the work easier to her. Such homely and commonplace counsels regarding justice between master and servant might oftener be put with profit before Christian congregations. It

must not be forgotten that there are masters and mistresses who are radically unjust, seeking for an impossible perfection, never satisfied, inflamed with the lust of ordering, the desire of showing power, petulant and despotic ; in such households there is none of the pre-requisites of peace.

It must not be omitted in the discussion of such a theme that the ranks of society are far more minutely graduated than is sometimes supposed. Besides the division into the Upper and Middle and Lower classes, and Masters and Servants and so forth, there are fine subdivisions of those classes whose etiquette of separation is severe. The tradesman is severed by a gulf of social distinction from the labourer, the butler from the page-boy, the housekeeper from the kitchenmaid. The risk of a despotic and unreasonable exercise of authority is probably more dangerous in what are called the " Lower Classes " than in the realms where Dukes and Marquises abide. Such classes have not a training which has done much for the middle and upper classes in the adjustment of obedience and authority, namely the Public School. The system of " fagging " in those schools may have been abused ; but when it is rightly worked it is an admirable discipline for the " fag " to learn to obey, and a still more admirable discipline for his youthful prefect to learn to govern. Under the system a great part of the management of school life is submitted to the older boys of the Sixth form, and it is not the least useful part of their training for life. To exercise authority without despotism or bullying, to get the right things done without exactingness, means that when the time comes for their launching upon life these lads have adjusted their minds to the proper relation of subordination and authority. In

short they have been at a school of Justice. It will be a good thing for the country when the principles that underlie such an education are more widely applied to all classes of the community. Better than reading, writing, and arithmetic is the lesson of obedience without the loss of self-respect and of authority without injustice.

Justice must not be contrasted with Benevolence. This distinction is often made. There is a proverb, "You must be just before you are generous." A frequent plea of the labouring classes at strike times is "We don't want charity; we want justice." This distinction, however, is an invalid one, and should not be made. It is incorrect to say that Justice is a negative virtue and Benevolence a positive or active virtue. A just man, that is, a man who seeks to do unto others as he would that they should do unto him, will not complete the programme of his life merely by an accurate fulfilment of contracts and an avoidance of partiality and unfairness. He is not just unless he has been generous to the verge of his knowledge and power.

Mediæval ethics, the ethics of feudalism, allowed one man to be the end for whom all others were the means, and considered that the one man was good if he was lavish in charitable gifts to the poor. Alongside of the nobleman's castle there grew up a system of semi-slavery in which hundreds lived in ignoble conditions for the benefit of one man called "noble." Almsgiving was recognised by the Church as the chief method of benevolence, and was considered to be most generous when it was most indiscriminate. A modern judgement decides that the mediæval baron had no right to be benevolent until he had been just, and that

doles to the poor are no substitute for the fairness which would not have exploited their labour. Had the essential unity of benevolence and justice been recognised the poor would not have needed to be helped ; they would have been able to help themselves. A regard to the personality of men rather than to their condition would have saved society from the evils of feudalism.

Modern ethics are similarly concerned with the source of wealth rather than with the use of wealth. Money unjustly acquired cannot be relieved from the taint of injustice merely because it is benevolently employed. A just man will consider that benevolence is a part of his duty in the acquisition as well as in the distribution of property. He has no right to dispense in charity what he has gained by exacting more than his due. The Christian teacher must endeavour to disabuse men's minds of the notion that they can atone for the unfair absorption of undue gains merely by flinging out of them a greater or less dole to Church and charity.

It must, however, be recognised that there are modern conditions which make the definition of Justice in any special circumstances a matter of great difficulty. Selfishness and prejudice on the side both of employers and employed warp the judgement and obscure the issues. Yet the general principle should be acknowledged that before Charity comes Justice, that men should get their due, not because other men are kind and good natured, but because it is their due. The rendering of their proper due, whether of wages or of work, is not to be regarded as a favour given as with a grudge, but as the proper relationship between self-respecting men. To claim more than is just, to withhold anything that is just, are equally immoral actions.

If it be true that in recent years capital and brains have been gaining more than their fair share of the results of business enterprise, and that profits have been increasing more rapidly than wages, it is for the employer to ask his conscience whether he is dealing honestly with his fellows or whether he is an unjust steward. Exactly in the same way, if it be true that workmen are not giving a fair day's work in exchange for their wage, or are not allowing the just return for the ability of management without which their labour would not be remunerative and for the capital without which their labour would not be required, then it is equally necessary for the workmen to search their conscience for an answer to the question whether they also are unjust.

The growth of the system of limited liability has introduced elements of difficulty into the settlement of the question, What is just as between employer and employed? The director of such a company says, "I have no right to be generous with other people's money," and in the presence of competition he is left with almost no anxiety except about his dividends. It would, however, be a pessimistic view of society that sees no hope of adjusting the Christian law to the new conditions. The law of Christ, and the elementary principles of Justice, are not abrogated because a Board of Directors has taken the place of an individual master. Few tasks are of more importance than that of thinking out the ethical principles which would save a limited company from a charge of merely exploiting labour in the interests of its shareholders. The guiding principle should be the essential unity of Justice and Benevolence and the impossibility of separating them under a truly moral system.

Justice has applications more intimate than to property and outward conditions. One often hears the phrase, "He has never had justice done to him." It covers facts of life of grave moral importance.

Even the prejudice of class hinders justice. There is not a country in Europe where no truth is discovered in the saying, "There is one law for the rich and another law for the poor." One who is drunk in a first-class carriage is said to have a fit; and one who has a fit in a third-class carriage is said to be drunk. There is no such respect of persons in real Justice.

A misfortune is the name we give to a calamity which befalls ourselves; we are apt to call it a judgement if it happens to our friends. The sense of Justice banishes such censorious thoughts.

There are advantages even in conversation which a just man will not take; opportunities are offered for repartee which his instinct tells him are unfair. Even in the commonest game the habit of Justice makes a man regard the rights of another as equally sacred with his own.

It has been represented to be a defect in the teaching of Christ that while He urged the passive aspect of Justice in the sense of abstaining from any unfair or injurious use of power, He did not emphasise the duty of the active use of power for the correction and abolition of wrong.

Paulsen makes the complaint that the absence of such "chivalrous Justice" forms "one of the most painful omissions in the morality of the New Testament. To work and suffer for others it recognises as a virtue; but of the duty of battling against injustice and showing violence for the protection of others it says nothing." Paulsen discovers the origin of such

chivalrous Justice in the Middle Ages. Other writers have dwelt on the same apparent defect in Christian ethics. It is a favourite question, "What would the Good Samaritan have done had he come upon the field half an hour sooner, and had found the victim of the robbers in the early stages of the attack? Would he have helped to fight against them, and, it may be, strike them down?" It is said that we do not know from the Gospel what course he ought to have followed. Moses, when he saw his fellow-countryman abused, strangled the Egyptian. That is in the Old Testament. When St. Peter struck Malchus he was bidden to put up his sword, and the whole New Testament attitude seems to be that of non-resistance and the eulogy of heroic suffering rather than of heroic struggle against wrong.

Undue emphasis can be given to such a criticism.

(*a*) Jesus made no effort at completing a system of ethics, and the omission of any instruction regarding this or that virtue is no indication that this or that virtue is incompatible with Christ's teaching and alien from His Spirit. The argument from silence is nowhere more inconclusive than in these particulars.

(*b*) It must be remembered that our Lord took much for granted in His teaching. For example, in His injunctions about almsgiving He did not need to emphasise the accepted duty of charity; He required rather to guard it against the dangers of hardness and ostentation. Such a caution is peculiarly applicable to His teaching about Justice.

The conditions of His time made it unnecessary for Him to inculcate what is called "chivalrous Justice," the revolt against oppression and wrong. There was too much rather than too little of such a

spirit among our Lord's hearers. They needed nothing less than to be stirred to hatred of tyranny. The whole community was seething with a sense of social iniquity and a wild desire for redress and revenge. It was of set purpose apparently that our Lord abstained from adding fuel to such flames. Here is the most probable reason for His omission of the claims of active Justice. It must not be admitted that our Lord would have taught that a man who saw injustice done which he could remedy was at liberty to refuse to remedy it. All power carries with it responsibility. Privilege has always the correlative of duty. This is a distinctive part of Christian teaching, and must not be thought to be neglected or denied because it is not positively emphasised.

When it is pointed out that the chivalrous Justice which seeks for the redress of wrong had its chief and most picturesque manifestation in mediæval times, it must not be forgotten that it was then specifically and definitely recognised to be Christian and associated with Christianity. The knights-errant bore a Cross on their armour. They, at least, were under no illusion that they had discovered some new virtue of which the Gospels and the Early Church were ignorant.

An examination of the principles of Jesus makes it apparent that active or chivalrous Justice is, as much as any other aspect of that virtue, the outcome of His spirit and teaching. His central maxim of Love contains it. The positive form into which he rendered the Golden Rule is its evident assertion. His own pity for the poor and downtrodden, His willingness to be associated with the victims of social sin, were the clear call to take the side of the oppressed against the

oppressor. As a matter of fact, all those who have done much—as distinct from those who have talked much—about chivalrous Justice have been zealously Christian men and women.

The noblest illustration of Justice the world has seen is in our Lord Jesus Christ. His teaching throbs with a sense of man's duty to man. Such parables as that of the Unjust Steward or the Two Debtors, such flaming words of condemnation as He uttered against those who corrupted those whom He called the "little ones," are but illustrations of that pervading message of Justice which He inculcated. But still more impressive is the deep undertone of Duty that sounds through the Holy Life, and that solemn satisfaction as He looked back on Duty done and said, "It is finished."

Moral philosophers have, as a rule, in modern times confined their discussion of Justice to the relationship between man and man. Fearless Christian moralists have not hesitated to ask a further question: Has everybody then a right except God? Has Justice no application as it refers to Him?

The question can only be answered in one way. A clergyman often speaks of his work in conducting the service of the Church as "duty"; he "takes duty" here or there. But in the strictest sense every man's relationship to the Supreme runs up into the same definition. Every sin is an act of injustice; it pays to another Master the contribution of service which God has the right to expect. Every neglect, through sloth or indifference, is an act of injustice; it defrauds God of the work on His side for which we were given life and faculty and opportunity. If men will not serve Him, it is not only sinful, it is unfair.

Love.—The pagan excellencies known as the Four Cardinal Virtues need to be established on a firmer foundation than pagan moralists could provide. They want a moral dynamic; and that is what Christian teaching provides. Our Lord said little about the Commandments; but the heart of His ethical system was in His insistence on Love.

Too much may be made of the mere etymology of the New Testament name for Love. It is perhaps as much a misfortune as an advantage that the writers of the New Testament felt themselves compelled to employ the new and unusual and classically unknown word *agape* instead of the familiar *eros*.

The reasons were of course obvious. Associations, not merely sensual, but even unclean, had gathered round the ancient word. St. John and St. Paul felt it to be impossible to apply the word to the Christian grace of Love, just as it would be impossible to use in such a connection the French word "amour" in our current English and conventional understanding of it.

Such a reluctance to combine ideas of human affection and sex relationship with a Christian virtue have always persisted. The Vulgate translated *agape*, not by "amor," but by "caritas." When Tyndale published his translation of the New Testament into English he translated *agape* into "love," and this was one of the chief charges which Sir Thomas More made against him in his *Dialogue*, published in 1528. The Authorised Version of 1611 reverted to the translation "charity," and the great dithyrambic passage in 1st Corinthians is known to English-speaking people as "the praise of charity." It was not till the publication of the Revised Version in 1880 that Tyndale was vindicated, and the far better translation "Love" was

accepted. Traces of the same disinclination to employ the common word with its semi-sensual suggestions can be found in many places. Caswall's translation of St. Bernard of Clairvaux's famous hymn, "Jesu dulcis memoria," is a lamentable instance. St. Bernard wrote :

Expertus potest dicere
Quid sit Jesum diligere.[1]

He meant that only those who have loved Jesus can understand what it means for character to have such a love for Him ; and the lines are correctly translated :

The love of Jesus what it is
None but His lovers know.

The associations, however, of the word "lovers" were so unpleasing to certain hypercritical persons that the meaningless phrase "loved ones" has been substituted—and, strange to say, has been accepted even by the translator himself.

Probably more harm than good has resulted from this squeamishness. It has been represented to be a fine thing that Christian writers could not accept the Greek word *eros* with its mixed connotations, and a singularly fortunate thing that just at the time a new and more suitable word, *agape*, should have sprung into use. One scholar wrote, it would not have been possible for St. John to write his Epistles or St. Paul to write the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians a few years earlier, for they would not have possessed the new clean word for "love." Against this conventional way of thinking and speaking two considerations must be urged.

There can never have been a time when the word

[1] Refer to page 50.

eros had only an evil meaning. Youths and maidens were never altogether foul-minded, and the tender passion must have been as pure in thousands of hearts as it is to-day. Moreover, beside the evil scum of libertines and coarse-livers there must have been always a substratum of quiet domestic affection. For example, those who judge France by its more frivolous literature do scant justice to the "amour" which is at the back of as fine a home-life as exists in any country of Europe. One only needs to read classical history in the light of one's own heart, and not of the hideous exaggerations of pedantic scholarship, to be convinced that there were elements in the word *eros* that might well have been consecrated by its use in the new religion.

Consider how such a use would have cleansed and lifted up the word, and given it suggestions of the divinest purity, even in such a way as the word "love" is consecrated in English by its association with God and Jesus Christ. Not once or twice religion has weakened its hold upon life because it has banished into dark and mysterious regions human impulses which in themselves are essentially clean, and has sought for itself a puritan phraseology which only in appearance, but not in reality, is more pure.

Archbishop Trench, in his book on *New Testament Synonyms*, reckons that there are four kinds of love, and that only one of them deserves a place in religion, and to be described as a Christian virtue. No such distinctions can be made. They are essentially arbitrary.

The effort to allegorise the Song of Solomon is reputable and permissible, if it be always admitted that the allegorical sense is not the original. It is only an abuse of language to describe its erotic phrases as

they are described in the chapter headings of the Authorised Version, "The love of Christ to His Church," and so forth; and popular exegetes land themselves in the most risky *doubles entendres* when they attempt to preach on such texts as if the love they describe were entirely spiritual. Nevertheless, the Song of Solomon well deserves its place in the Canon, though it may be frankly agreed that its place would never have been accorded except for a belief in its symbolical reference. The love of man and woman is not an unholy thing: it forms a large part of the content of human life: its consecration by religion is one of the most desirable consummations. When Love is spoken of it would be vain, and as mistaken as it would be useless, to exclude from it those phases of the passion which bloodless people, or hypersensitive, emasculated people, insist on describing as "animal." After all, our bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost. That Holy Spirit can transfigure and purify everything that is natural and normal: only ascetic dreamers can call the body unclean.

The word "Love," which is often on the lips of Christian preachers, has gathered round it other associations that are even more unpleasing to the manly. It is sometimes regarded as holding implications of the sentimental, the unreal, the false. There is behind it an unctuousness which is offensive to a sober piety. Some very good Christians are slow to use the word.

This is unfortunate. But it is more a matter of language than of life. The very people who are least willing to speak about "Love" are the most forward to encourage and help every scheme of philanthropy. Cynical about the phraseology of Love and suspicious of anything feminine or exaggerated, their hearts are

tender and pitiful, and Love is the source of all that is best in their character. When they test any man's religion it is almost invariably by the amount of Love which it contains, and no words of our Master command a more ungrudging assent than His declaration that the standard by which men will be tried at the Final Judgement will be the standard of Love. "I was sick and ye visited me."

The place of Love in the Christian system can hardly be over-estimated.

In the realm of pure theology Love is the only light upon the supreme mystery of the Trinity. Were the doctrine of the Trinity not true, it would follow that before the Creation God had no one to love but Himself, and therefore the Almighty were an infinite selfishness. After the Creation, God would only have a finite world on which to lavish His care, and therefore His love would remain inadequate to His other perfections. But, because we believe the doctrine of the Trinity, we see that the Spirit of Love for ever proceeded from the Father to the Son from all eternity in infinite measure. Thus does Love illuminate the profoundest mystery, "God is Love."

It may also be maintained that Love is the fundamental principle in Christian ethics. St. Augustine's great phrase, "Love, and then do what you like," contains the essence of morality as it has been taught by evangelical believers. St. Augustine founded upon St. Paul, who in his famous chapter to the Corinthians declared that love was the greatest thing in the world, showing successively that it was greater than five qualities which he enumerated—eloquence, wisdom, enthusiasm, liberality, and devotion. It is greater than all those things because it is the pre-requisite

without which those things could not be. It is the driving power behind all virtue. And in this sense it may be described as fundamental.

It must be maintained that in a rational nature no mere emotion, however important, can arrogate to itself the place of wisdom. Like every other passion of our nature, love must be limited by reason. What are the limits of Love ?

Love to others must have regard to legitimate self-love. Our Lord bade a man love his neighbour as himself, and implicitly taught that a measure of self-love is right. St. Paul declared, " He that loveth his wife, loveth himself," thereby suggesting that one could properly thus love oneself. It is evident that if a man does not regard himself he can have no love worthy to be offered to another. The love which has not taken care that it is a gift worth giving and receiving has defeated its own end. The Cavalier poet was right in his famous line that the love of honour gives to the love of man or woman a value that it could not otherwise attain. To be good is often the best and most effective form of doing good. The development of a self-respecting personality is the finest gift one can offer to society ; and the man does most for the world who in a right sense makes the most of himself. For example, a divinity student who hopes to be a useful minister sees beside him every day the horrors and sorrows of the slums. His benevolence tempts him to neglect his studies in order that he may spend himself in labours among those unhappy people. It is apparent that, in obeying the immediate call of Love, he is disobeying its ultimate and far more insistent call. He is maiming his usefulness for life. In trying to weed another man's vine-

yard his own vineyard hath he not kept. A more extreme case, and less controvertible, is that of a woman who gives up her honour for the sake of Love. It is apparent in such a case that duty to self comes before the duty of self-sacrifice. Christian self-denial is not an immoral disregard of self. Personality is a sacred trust of which no love can warrant the surrender. We are moral ends and not merely means for others for their gratification—or even for their highest good.

Another limitation upon love is imposed by what may be called special claims. A man has no right in his philanthropy to give all his means to the support of wounded soldiers and their dependants while he has a wife and children to provide for. Love ought to be world-wide; but it ought also to be guided by reasonable methods; and it is manifest that one can do more good to those whose circumstances one knows, and who have been placed providentially within the province of one's care, than one can do for one's dusky and distant brother in Central Africa. The work of Foreign Missions is a prominent duty of the Christian Church: it widens the imagination, and ministers to the sentiment of Catholicity, which is of the highest value in an intellectual relation to our faith. Our Lord gave the evangelisation of the world as His last command. No Christian can be deaf to it or disobey it. And, though the injunction is usually a very unnecessary one, it is a moral truth of which we need not be ashamed that "charity begins at home." Such limitations naturally also warrant preferences for those nearest to us: they are legitimately also dearest. Our Lord Himself showed such preferences—for St. John, for the Bethany family,

for the rich young ruler whose attractive appearance and manner won His heart at first sight. Though we may not be able to distinguish types or kinds of love, it is a mere fact of life that we must acknowledge degrees in it. One's father and mother, one's intimate friends, are more to one than those of whom we have merely heard, and much more than the cowards and sneaks and criminals of whom we are told.

Love may shade from the warmest affection into a mere good-will: but it does not, on account of such limitations, become less a Christian virtue; and it may be maintained that a man increases in Christian virtue just in proportion as he is able to widen and enrich the sphere of his interest in, and his care for, the welfare of mankind.

A further limitation of love is found in the effects which it has upon others. It must seek their highest good. Agreement cannot be found with Kant in his statement that the purpose of love is to seek the happiness of others. That is not genuine love which results in spoiling a child, in making favourites among scholars, in demoralising a community by indiscriminate charity. It has been the fault of Roman Catholic teaching that it has too often identified charity with almsgiving: though we are not ready to accept Paulsen's more general statement that "Christianity has fostered this kind of beneficence." Almsgiving may be mere laziness, or sentimental luxury, the desire to escape trouble, or even the extracted toll of fear. It has often been said that every sixpence given at one's door to a beggar is wasted. But it is worse than wasted. It helps to demoralise still further the man who receives it; it encourages a number of parasites of society; it dis-

honours work and gives to idle beggars a part of the sum—never large—that is in our power for the help of real distress. Without developing a harsh or censorious spirit, it is the duty of good citizens to enquire, so far as is possible, into every case that seeks help. Where personal enquiry is impossible, it is wise to use the agency of the Charity Organisation Society. When a case of real hardship is found, the first care should be to respect the man's personality, to put him on the way of helping himself rather than to fling a dole to him, to remember that his whole life is before him and not merely a week's hunger from which it is comparatively easy to rescue him. Real philanthropy will always be limited by the dominating desire to preserve self-respect and independence. When, however, it is manifest that the unfortunate person cannot help himself, Love will seek out the most appropriate and the kindliest methods for his permanent relief.

A criticism upon our Lord's new commandment, "that ye love one another," has sometimes been made that such a virtue cannot be commanded, that it is a frame of mind which even Omnipotence cannot create by a mere fiat, for omnipotence is not omnipotent in regard to Love. Maurice expressed this in the following terms: "Brethren, I tell you plainly: I find far greater difficulty in this commandment than in all the rest of the discourse. . . . If it is a mere precept written in a book, it is the cruellest precept that ever was uttered. Men say so when they are honest. They say: Tell me to do anything but this. We will give, if it is necessary, ten thousand rivers of oil, the first-born of our body for the sin of our soul. But do not tell us to love. That we can do in obedience

to no statute, from dread of no punishment. Even so, if God demands that we should bring this offering to Him, or perish, we must perish." These words of Maurice are more specious than true. They do not give sufficient account of the office of Will in fostering and developing emotion. A philanthropic disposition can be created and trained. By doing acts of kindness we train a habit of kindness. By directing our minds voluntarily and of set purpose to the lovable features of a man's character, and by restraining voluntarily the temptation to be critical of his faults, we come in time to cherish sentiments of benevolence towards him. Nothing is more certain, as a matter of experience, than that the new commandment can be obeyed.

Finally, it may be asked why the commandment to love the brethren is claimed by Christian Ethics as new with Christ? In Leviticus xix. 18 the Israelites had been bidden to the same charity: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The lawyer who tempted Christ recalled this ancient law of his race. If we were only dealing with words it might be admitted that the commandment was not new. But think of facts, and not of words merely. Did any Jew before the years that we mark by the words "Anno Domini" go travelling over Asia and Europe as St. Paul did, not for the keenness of acquiring knowledge, not for pleasure, or the lust of gain, but because he loved his Master and he loved the souls of men? The new element in the passion of Love was the Lord's own inspiration and presence. St. Paul spoke of the length and breadth and depth and height of the Love of Christ—its length because it endured, not foiled by unworthiness, not soured by disappointment, for-

bearing to the end; its breadth because Samaritans (yes, and Scotsmen) came into its wide-embracing arms; its depth because it stooped to die; and its height because all the sanctities were around it and it touched no soul but to purify it and raise it up. There is no use in employing old words to describe a Love that is to be like that of Christ. Let the words be what they like, the essence of the law was new.

When Gibbon set himself in his detached and critical way to discover the reasons for the marvellously rapid spread of Christianity over the Roman Empire in the first centuries, he set down five causes which seemed to him sufficient. They were:

1. The zeal of the early Christians.
2. Their doctrine of immortality.
3. The miraculous gifts of the apostolic age.
4. The pure morality of the Christian community.
5. The unity and discipline of the primitive Church.

Gibbon omitted one thing which even pagan Romans themselves had the wit to see—"Behold how these Christians love one another." It was Love that worked the wonders of the early age. It works wonders still. A distinguished journalist of our time but lately dead told of a minister with great pulpit gifts and a reputation for cleverness who yet was conspicuously unsuccessful in his profession; and when the journalist asked the reason, it was given to him in these words: "He never loved his people and they knew it." Many a professional man—doctor, politician, teacher—coveting the best gifts, training himself in the latest accomplishment of his specialism, has failed in influence just for the same reason, the imprisoning effect of his very success in professional life, the atrophy of

sensibility, the increasing incapacity for sympathy, for public spirit, for charity—an incapacity which makes some men of the highest endowments among the least serviceable, least loving, and least loved of a community. In contrast to all this there are great words that Henry Drummond once addressed to men who were going abroad as missionaries; they are just as applicable to men who are remaining at home. "You can take nothing greater to the heathen world than the impress and reflection of the Love of God upon your own character. This is the universal language. It will take you years to speak in Chinese or in the dialects of India. But, from the day you land, that language of Love, understood by all, will be pouring forth its unconscious eloquence. Take into your new sphere of labour, where you also mean to lay down your life, that simple charm and your life-work must succeed. You can take nothing greater; you can take nothing less. You may take every accomplishment; you may be braced for every sacrifice; but if you give your body to be burned and have not Love, it will profit you, and the cause of Christ, nothing."

VII

GROWING AGE AND THE OUTLOOK

Middle Age. — Middle age may be defined as the years between thirty and fifty. It is the fullness and the flower of life. During those years a man has a hold upon his destiny and tastes the ripe flavour of the world. It is the time of accomplishment. Minds that get their stimulus from passion, such as Burns and Byron, come earlier to maturity. But most of the world's great men have done their supreme achievements in middle age. Wellington at Waterloo defeated Napoleon, who was born in the same year, when he was forty-six. At that age, also, John Lawrence disarmed the Indian mutineers and reconquered India. Nelson reached the glorious zenith of his career at Trafalgar at forty-seven. Sir Walter Scott wrote *Ivanhoe* and gained the high-water mark of his fame at forty-eight. Milton sat down to write *Paradise Lost* in his fiftieth year.

When we think, not of the illustrious but of ordinary people, we find the years of middle age, between thirty and fifty, marked as a rule by the same characteristics. A man has found himself. He can grasp a situation. He is not afraid of assuming a new responsibility. He can put through his work with ease and expedition and thoroughness. Certain outward advantages also belong to those years. If things be right, a man discovers that a measure of deference is paid to him:

positions of honour and influence are offered to him : usually, also, he has won independence and comfort in worldly circumstances and has built up a home. For all these reasons the years between thirty and fifty might well be reckoned the very best years of life. Yet one seems to be nearer God at other times.

An ingenious commentator on Scripture interpreted the phrase of the 91st Psalm " the destruction that wasteth at noonday " as descriptive of the perils of the middle-aged. If life be described under the figure of a day, as we so often picture it (" life's little day "), the morning is the natural image of youth and the evening of old age. Noontide is left to represent the years between thirty and fifty ; and it is from the perils of that period we ask to be delivered, when we pray to be shielded from the " destruction that wasteth at noonday."

Youth and age have, of course, their own perils. But the young and the old have each a peculiar tie to the spiritual world that is weakened in the intervening years.

The sensitive fresh mind of the young is peculiarly the home of spiritual aspiration. It has already been said that there is less value in the American enquiry by " questionnaire " about the periods of religious experience than is commonly attached to it. Of 1784 persons who gave their testimony to Starbuck—men and women of various ranks and degrees of education —it was discovered that the average age at which they came under religious impression was 16·4. Whatever worth is to be given to such statistics, it is probable that if a man is to feel deeply the power of the spiritual world, it will be in the innocent, impressionable, sensitive days of youth.

Who, again, has not seen that, as old age gathers round a man, and he contemplates Death as no strange and impossible visitor, but as a kindly friend whose step is heard at the door, a certain serenity and simplicity of faith seems to return to the old man's spirit? His converse with the Unseen becomes more intimate and unrestrained: some breath of heaven seems to bathe him and win him already to the blessed life beyond. Thus does religion arch over life, touching with closer contact its early and its aged years.

It can hardly be questioned, on the other hand, that it is more difficult for the middle-aged to maintain their correspondence with Heaven.

In the full tide of business activity a man tends to become mechanical, the drudge of an occupation, narrowed to the interests of his daily toil.

A crust of selfishness is apt to form round him and his household. Sir Walter Scott quotes in his *Journal* the saying of Thomas Moore: "More mean things have been done in the world under the shelter of 'wife and children' than under any pretext worldly-mindedness can resort to." "Wife and children" is the favourite excuse of the middle-aged man when a demand is made upon his money or his time.

In those years also the relish grows for food and drink and comfort. If a middle-aged man be not careful, then is the time when self-indulgence binds him as a slave.

With the clearer view of life and human nature which these years bring, there follows also a disillusionment which easily degenerates into cynicism. So many shams have been found out that the man is tempted to suspect all women's virtue and all men's honour, and to develop that frame of mind,

of all others the most unchristian, which is called "knowingness."

The worst is that he has found himself out. If he has any judgement at all, a man of forty knows what he can do, and what he cannot do, what positions are for ever unattainable, what ambitions vain. The big things which a lad dreamt of are not to be. The middle-aged man knows that he will never be a leader or a commanding influence. People will not turn their heads to look at him as he passes. The commonplace claims him as its own.

The religious peril of all this is evident. It is very often about forty that a man gives up going to church. The language of worship has become an unknown tongue to him, and much of religious sentiment unreal to the verge of being unpleasing. It is not necessary to say that such a man is an unbeliever. He is still convinced that it was not he who made the world, and it is not he who rules it. And death—the most solemn of all the objects which religion contemplates—did not become an actuality to him until quite recently. Few people really begin to believe that they will die till they are forty.

It can hardly be doubted that middle age is not the chosen home either of romance or of religion. The period has peculiar dangers of its own which well may make a man or woman who has reached it wish that they may not die then.

Another reason for clinging to life in middle age is the feeling that big things are going to happen and men of ability want to see them.

> Thou shalt arise, and mercy yet
> Thou to Mount Zion shalt extend:
> Her time for favour which was set,
> Behold, is now come to an end.

Some such feeling is strong in the middle-aged who have their hold on the reins of life, at whatever period of the world's history they are cast. It could not be stronger than in our own time. People feel that they are on the brink of great discoveries and achievements. They want to see them before they die.

If, for example, a man is a doctor, he knows that one by one the secrets of the great diseases are being wrested from nature, and he believes that in time these diseases can be so counteracted that the normal term of life may be extended to a hundred years. Can it be wondered at that such a man would deplore that he should not be spared to the utmost limits of the appointed time in order that he might witness, even if he did not share in, the conquest of these enemies of man ?

So does an earnest Churchman expect great and happy changes within a generation. Not to speak of intellectual and spiritual gains, he looks for the accomplishment of some measure of Church Union. He wants to see it before he dies.

A son's or a daughter's success in life, the floating into useful beneficence of some cherished scheme, all such achievements as a man believes to be imminent, make their appeal in his impassioned desire for a complete life.

What is the Gospel for middle age ? It can be summed up in two words. The first is " God."

> It fortifies my soul to know
> That though I perish truth is so
> That howsoe'er I stray and range,
> Whate'er I do Thou dost not change.
> I steadier step when I recall
> That though I slip Thou dost not fall.

" Underneath are the everlasting arms " has been the message to frail mortality ever since those profound and passionate believers from whom we received the Old Testament found their refuge in the Eternal God. To check the impatience of middle age at a premature death there is no thought so powerful as the thought of God. That great teacher, Thomas Arnold of Rugby, died before he was fifty. The last entry in his Diary was this: " The day after to-morrow is my birthday, if I am permitted to live to see it—my forty-seventh birthday since my birth. How large a portion of my life on earth is already passed. And then—what is to follow this life ? How worthy my outward work seems, contracting and softening away into the gentler employments of old age. In one sense, how nearly can I now say ' Vixi.' And I thank God that, as far as ambition is concerned, it is, I trust, fully mortified. I have no desire other than to step back from my present place in the world and not to rise to a higher. Still, there are works which, with God's permission, I would do before the night cometh." The good man's life was ended on earth soon after these words were written. The words are full not only of direct reference to God, but of that spirit of thankfulness to Him and of submission to His will which is the true corrective both of the sins and of the fruitless desires of middle age.

The second word of the Gospel for middle age is " Christ."

Christ had scarcely more than entered on middle age when the call to the Father's side was heard. He died at thirty-three. Already, however, He had shown how the perils of that period of life can be overcome. His spirit knew no dulling of enthusiasm, no weaken-

ing by the way. The easy couch of self-indulgence into which middle age is tempted to sink held no allurement for Him. The presence of God was not veiled from Him by the activities of life, nor made distasteful by its crudities. Man, His brother, was no less His brother because Christ's eyes were open to the sins and the frailities of His race. And when He saw with certainty that what the world calls "failure" was to crown His mission, there was no hint of surrender. There was not a moment's pause of resolution and of faith. So Christ met the incipient perils of middle age. When in the midst of His days He was taken away, can we not see that the Everlasting Arms received Him to make Him for ever the Lord of quick and dead—the Monarch of our souls?

The Family.—The idea of home presents itself to most business and professional men in three successive phases. Women for the most part only see it in two phases.

First, there is the old home—our parents' home. Looking back on it now, we can discern the mistakes we made. We are not a little inclined to follow the example of old Dr. Samuel Johnson, who went to the market place at Uttoxeter and stood there bareheaded for an hour as some sort of atonement for a disrespect he had shown to his father many years before. Most of us would admit that we came short of a son's, a daughter's, part in ways which now grieve us to remember. We were not nearly frank enough, for one thing. We did not realise what a delight it is to a parent's heart to have the simple confidence which does not stop to say, Is this worth telling? or, Would it be

wise to tell that ? We were sullen too. Outsiders got our good manners and our cheerfulness, while any sort of silent or ungracious conduct was thought good enough for home. The consciousness of ability, which is often prior to common-sense, made us impatient of what seemed old-fashioned, irksome, even absurd ; and we chafed at rules which seemed obsolete. How much sorrow we may have caused we can only guess. But there are few of us who are not aware that we caused some sorrow. Looking back on that home, however, we can see what a fine school it was for character. Compromise and courtesy and forgiveness were taught in it as nowhere else they could be taught. If we are not more angular and prejudiced and absurd than we are, it is because of the fearful candour of the home where our faults were freely told, and because of the wholesome humour by which they were laughed away. Then suddenly the old home ceased. It was only then that the truth about it dawned upon us. We saw the pictures and books and furniture we had been accustomed to since childhood put up to auction, and handled by strangers, and the gaunt stripped rooms crowded with bargain seekers ; and we turned away sick from the doors of what once had been our heart's refuge. So we said good-bye to the old home.

About all that period of human life our Lord Jesus has left the most beautiful and affecting example. What He was to Joseph and Mary, what He must have been to the other children of the Nazareth home, there are sufficient indications in the Gospels. But they are so familiar that it is needless to dwell upon them. All that need be said about it is that any young man who thinks about his father's house, and treats it as if it were only a dormitory or a restaurant or a bank,

has something to answer for beside the example of Him of whom it is written that He went down with His parents, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. And His mother kept all His sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

The second stage in the life of most professional and business men is when they have no real home. They go to the City or the University; they pass from lodging to lodging, with only a few books and clothes as all their personal belongings—free, nomadic, restless, unsettled adventurers upon the ocean of life. Most of men know something of these years in lodgings. The time is not so dangerous to character as it might seem to be. For there is something essentially wholesome in the air of liberty, and indulgences which there is no one to deny lose something of the attraction of "stolen waters" and "bread eaten in secret." Yet the solitary man meets perils enough. There is a risk of the man in lodgings losing his care for the refinements and amenities of life. Even when his conduct is not vicious, it is apt to be merely self-regarding. In those years habits are formed which gravely affect all the issues of his after life. Those who have influence with young men at this stage of experience should counsel them to value highly the attractions of such good houses as are open to them. An able set of like-minded men, grouped in debating societies or in athletic clubs or in the manifold organisations of the Church, give a field for the exercise of energies which need expression. There is something wrong with the man at such a time of life who has no instinct for friendship, and who hears no whisper of that call to social service which is the most insistent voice of our time.

It is to that man without a home that Jesus comes the nearest. For most of His life it was true of Him that "the Son of man had not where to lay His head." These words must not be exaggerated into the meaning that Jesus had to sleep in the open air for want of a bed to lie on. The words only mean that He went from one lodging to another; from the shelter of one friend's roof-tree to a refuge in the house of some other acquaintance, which yet He could in no sense call His "home." Young men have never failed to discover this affinity between them and their Master. The loneliness, and yet the stimulus, of an unfettered freedom was His as it is theirs. Everything that is generous in youth has been wont to respond to the appeal of that Example. Here, they have seen, was One who cared nothing for self-indulgence and pleasure; here was One whose burning and consuming passion was to make the world better; here were genius and every beautiful and attractive quality, everything that could command admiration and achieve success, consecrated without a dream of personal advancement to the cause of mankind. Till the Judgement Day dawns it will not be known how many men in lonely lodgings, in the apprenticeship of life, have been shielded from evil, and stimulated to a generous and helpful life, because of the present and powerful thought of the Man of Nazareth who "had not where to lay His head."

The third stage of experience for men—it is often only the second for women—comes. They make a new home of their own. Does Jesus fail them then? It seems, indeed, that His example is no longer with them; for He never formed the sacred ties of marriage and fatherhood. But, curiously enough, it is just to this

third stage of man's experience that Jesus devoted the most affectionate detail of His teaching. He who dealt so little in rules of conduct framed a minute and stringent marriage law. And, strangely enough too, that very relation of which His own experience knew nothing is consecrated by the noblest exposition of the sacramental meaning of the marriage bond that ever eloquence uttered, when St. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians declared that the parallel of the relation of husbands and wives is the bond that unites Christ to the Church.

If we seek from our Master His teaching regarding the new home which love builds it will be summed up briefly in two words, "Stability" and "Goodness." Joshua, the hero and leader of Israel, living in a more distant day under a light that was comparatively dim, summed up the two secrets of a Christian home when he said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Stability is the first thing. In a hundred spheres of activity we know the value of such a frame of mind—what one may call the "freedom of constraint," the relief of knowing that a second course need not be debated because one course is indubitably plain. Even in so apparently secular a matter as our vote at the polling booth at an election, we go in an easier and a happier frame if we do not stand hesitating between policies and parties; we have settled the matter with ourselves, we have taken our side and are sure. It was the same satisfaction of an ordered and chosen path that made St. Paul say, "Henceforth let no man trouble me: I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." There is no use attempting to influence a man who is so evidently decided.

Such a course is a wise one for a young man as he makes a new home. Let him make it plain that his mind is made up. Let him be a Communicant, standing on the Lord's side ; and a hundred difficulties as a consequence disappear. He himself and others know where he is, what he wants to do, where is the goal that he would travel to. Especially should the testimony of the Lord's Table be urged on all young married people. It is thus they consecrate their happiness. They say by their presence at the Communion, " As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." A married life, begun in such a spirit, with such a resolution, will be saved from many of the perils before which others fall—the perils of a merely selfish pleasure-seeking life, of a foolish ostentation, of a senseless and stupid rivalry in hospitality or dress or surroundings. From the beginning there will be the elements of happiness in such a life which alone are permanent—and the very stability of the decision will itself be a source of unspeakable peace.

All such illustrations serve to make clear that great doctrine of the stability and permanence of the marriage tie which is at the root of the teaching of Jesus. If one was to believe the writers of popular novels, the failure of marriage is one of the commonest tragedies of modern society, and an easier and quicker refuge in divorce would be the most wholesome social reform that governments could provide. In the United States of America the governments of some of the States have already made divorce so simple and inexpensive that the whole teaching of Jesus regarding the stability of marriage seems to be deliberately denied. No public danger with us of which the politicians speak is so serious as the growth of a

sentiment opposed to the permanence of the marriage tie.

There are individual hardships under the rigorous law of Christ. Men and women are set sometimes in that position in which George Eliot was set, with such a disastrous result to her reputation for altruism and public spirit. Doubtless also among the marriages that are made "lightly or unadvisedly" there are some every year which are soon recognised to be tragical mistakes. Yet our Lord's teaching was that—except for one reason, and the records are not unanimous that He even allowed that one reason—the bond of marriage is not to be broken. That very stability and permanence of the relation has worked more than anything else for its happiness. Most married people have had their "differences." Cowper said:

> The kindest and the happiest pair
> Will find occasion to forbear,
> And something every day they live
> To pity and perhaps forgive.

But the knowledge that the bond cannot be dissolved saves the "tiff" or the whim or the foolish humour of an hour from wrecking two people's happiness. Something of the solemnity of a lifelong bond strikes down even into the giddiest and the shallowest mind, and arouses suggestions of gravity and duty which never else might have sprung there.

Our Lord would have repeated with His august approval the note of the Christian home as it was expressed by His ancient servant Joshua: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." The root of the happiness of the home is in goodness. Not every home can be rich, beautiful, or even comfortable.

Indeed, wealth has little to do with home-making: how little can be seen from such a ghastly picture as Hogarth's "Marriage of Convenience." On the other hand, all Scotsmen know from that loving interpreter of our national life, Robert Burns, how the "Saturday Night" in a cottar's humble dwelling may be the very embodiment of ideal domestic bliss. The four pillars on which a home rests are Love, Purity, Unselfishness, Order. If these pillars stand firm, the roof-tree covers a happy home. If they break down, there may be chilly wealth or enervating comfort, but true domestic life there cannot be; and it is only in a shocking irony that the dwelling-place can be called a "Home." One hears much about those divorces that make the daily journals such unpleasant reading. But of what proportion of marriages is it that we know that they have failed, and that for one reason or another they have become tragedies? How small a proportion it is! All over Scotland to-day are happy homes—fathers, mothers, children, their hearts sure of each other, their ingle-fires bright with a pure domestic affection, the sorrows of life incalculably mitigated for them because a deep well of mutual sympathy springs up to comfort and refresh them, and daily the unspoken prayer is being offered to God that happiness so exquisite, so serene, so satisfying, may in His mercy be prolonged. Jesus spoke more of the family than of any other aspect of human life; He laid down for it His most stringent law. Amid all the evils which desolate our social system, the Christian family as it is found in millions of homes pleases the Lord's heart.

Old Age.—Few people like the thought of growing old. To some it is a cause of constant dread. Some

men, and perhaps even more women, try to disguise from themselves the inevitable fact. They dye their hair, and wear juvenile clothes, and would fain shut out even from their own eyes the symptoms of advancing years.

The reasons for such a dread of old age are manifold. The weakening of physical powers which age brings is often distressing; but it is not so distressing as the failure of memory, and the difficulty of assimilating new ideas.

The solitude of old age also is often pathetic. Life is like a triangle—broad at the base, but narrowing steadily as we reach the top. At the base there are many around us, kindred and friends. They drop from our side one by one as we ascend the triangle. As we get to the top we find ourselves almost alone, the old familiar faces having disappeared.

What is dreaded in old age more than anything else is its seeming uselessness. Younger people press into the charge of the world's business. Their elders feel themselves "shelved," as the common phrase has it. They seem to have no share "in all that's done beneath the circuit of the sun." There are not many who could truthfully repeat for themselves the well-known verses—

> Wouldst thou be young again?
> So would not I.

Ever since man appeared on the earth he must have been seeking some Gospel for old age. Literature is full either of moans over departed youth, or of philosophical suggestion of the compensations which the aged find. Perhaps the best known treatise on the subject in literature is Cicero's famous tractate, *De Senectute* ("Concerning old age"). Cicero answers one

by one the four charges which are brought against old age: (1) That age makes men useless for the world's work; (2) that it weakens the faculties; (3) that it deprives men of the capacity for pleasure; and (4) that it overshadows men's minds with the thought of death.

As against the first charge Cicero has no difficulty in showing that many old men are extremely useful, their wisdom being more valuable than callow enthusiasm.

He is less successful in defending old age against the second charge of failing powers, though there is universal value in Shakespeare's counsel of the prudent conduct of early life if old age is to be vigorous and happy—

> In my youth I never did apply
> Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood;
> Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo
> The means of weakness and debility;
> Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
> Frosty but kindly.

Cicero accepts willingly the third challenge that age disables from many pleasures. He rejoices in the fact. Age, he declares, renders no finer service to humanity than its deliverance from the bondage of desire. In this contention, however, Cicero did not deal with all the facts of human nature. He shut his eyes to the existence of wicked old men—such as the Emperor Tiberius in Rome, or such as Thackeray has represented for us in the Marquis of Steyne. But he was on solid ground when he pointed out that, if advancing years deprive us of some enjoyments, other pleasures, such, for example, as are given by conversation and literature, and above all by contact with nature, become serener with old age.

As for the fourth charge, that death preoccupies and

overshadows an old man's mind, Cicero is right when he declares that the natural and inevitable cannot be an evil, and that to live well is the purpose of the soul rather than to live long. He is nearer still to the faith of Christ when he sees in death the gate of life, and makes his aged hero rejoice that he cannot be far off from the time when he will behold again the great and good men he has known who have entered before him into rest.

Such, in brief compass, is the Gospel for old age as it was preached by one of the subtlest and most eloquent men of antiquity. If one says that, compared with the Holy Scriptures, Cicero's gospel is like a candle beside the sun, it is not to make little of the candle-light.

But the Bible's teaching about old age is like the sun. It gives a picture of an ideal old age, unique in its mellowness and meekness and moral grandeur. It is not only that the Bible—like all Oriental literature—is reverent of the hoary head ; there is a spring of life in it which seems to make the passage of time irrelevant, and to open for our frail humanity the sources of a vigour ever fair and ever young.

One of the great quests of the mediæval times was for an Elixir of life—a certain ruby which the alchemists believed could arrest the course of the years and make a man of threescore agile and ruddy like a boy. The Elixir of life was but a figure of the secret of perpetual youth which the Bible long ago had found. " They shall still bring forth fruit in old age : they shall be full of sap and green." Nor is there any mystery about the secret of youthfulness. It is stated in plain words in the 92nd Psalm : " The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree." " They that are

planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God." That is, Goodness and Faith are the answer to the question, How shall we keep young ?

Goodness—or, as the Bible loves to call it, "Righteousness "—is the first element of character that arrests decay, and makes even old age bear fruit. It is because the life of man is kept in contact with the unchanging scheme of things—that purpose of good which is ever transforming and renewing itself, and, though it has pervaded the universe since time began, has on it still the dew of its youth. The man or woman who really grows old is the man or woman who has lost the soul of goodness within. Set before one such a picture of a *blasée* woman of society as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu revealed herself when she wrote : "Society is good : but I have seen society. What is the use of talking or of hearing ' bons mots ' ? I have done both till I am tired of doing either. I have laughed till I have no wish to laugh again, and made others laugh till I have hated them for being such fools." There is something terribly grim and old in such a worldly woman's words. Contrast her with such a man as John Wesley, young at heart at eighty years. Contrast her with some men and women we have known, about whom we could scarcely believe that the register was right which told of portentous age ; they seemed to us so full of vitality, of humanity, so hopeful and buoyant, themselves in touch with life and the source of life to others. The secret of the difference is always the same. It is Righteousness. The eternal remains every moment present to us, and old age is not useless, as sometimes we fear, but a testimony of the worth of the ideals, of the pre-eminence of duty over every

other aim, of the rejuvenating power of Righteousness. Thus, as St. Paul said, "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

The second element of character which keeps the heart young is Faith. Faith implies a hold upon the spiritual: an outlook upon issues wider than personal pleasure or gain: a vision and a gleam. It was in this sense of the word "faith" that Oliver Wendell Holmes —who himself kept into a fine old age all the sympathies and the courage of youth—said, "It is faith in something, an enthusiasm for something, that keeps life worth living." There could not be a more wonderful illustration of it than the story of the men whom we think of as distinctively the old men of the world—the patriarchs of Holy Scripture. A wonderful age had gathered over them before they set out on their heroic ventures. Abraham must have been at least seventy-five when he left his home at the Divine bidding to seek a country: "and he went out not knowing whither he went." Moses, according to the usual computation of his career, must have been eighty when the call to ransom his people from bondage caught his heart. Other people might have been thinking of their graves when those men of faith were girding themselves for high endeavours, like youthful knights before the tourney.

There is an illustration quite as marvellous in modern times of the power of faith to keep the heart young. The great Russian, Tolstoi, was not always a believer: up to middle age he was a sceptic, and his scepticism made him as grim a cynic and pessimist as could be. But then faith in a gospel, which, whether we agree with it or not, is at least a great, unselfish, and command-

ing programme of life, seized him, and there was not a younger heart in Europe than that which beat in the bosom of that wonderful old man. There is not a sadder figure in the world than that of an old man who has lost his faith. But if there still be the soul of aspiration in a man, if he live upon the shall be and feed upon the future, the snows may gather on his head and his feet may go haltingly, yet " shall he still bring forth fruit in old age : he shall be full of sap and green."

The closing days of a beautiful life have often been compared to the autumn of the year, the slow-dropping mellow autumn which follows a summer rich and glorious. And a strain of melancholy has often mingled with the reflection. In many ways that is the saddest season of the year, the fullest of regrets. The ingathering of the sheaves preaches silently concerning the harvest of our sowing, and the bare stubble fields are an apt enough image of a spirit-world left desolate of fruit. The earliest impulse is to bind the thoughts of age and autumn together, and read sorrow over both. But two poets who have seen deeper into the meaning of nature than any who have used our English speech have taught us better. Each of them has left us an inspiration of hope.

In his famous poem on the " Intimations of Immortality " Wordsworth sorrowed over the passing of the radiance of youth, and of that buoyancy and joy of life which only the youthful know. But as the autumn mood gathered over him, and threatened his Christian faith with its message of decay, he rallied his soul with the recollection of the indestructible and tender bonds with which age and youth alike are tied in the great family of humanity.

We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind ;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be ;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering ;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

Such was Wordsworth's gospel for autumn and old age. There is a poem by Shelley, less known but equally near the heart of truth and hope—the "Ode to the West Wind." He wrote it at Florence, in a wood that skirts the Arno, one day when the west winds of autumn drove before them the falling leaves. On him came the autumn melancholy ; for he felt himself no longer, as in boyhood, the comrade of the west wind in its frolic and gaiety ; rather did it seem to blow his life abroad as ruthlessly as it scattered the leaves. But Shelley rallied himself out of such autumn gloom. His heart expanded to the thought of the wide world to which the west wind blew, and his aspiration was that, even as the dead leaves were the soil and the nourishment of a new life of nature, his thought and fancy might be used as a contribution to the life of the great world of humanity that was to be.

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth !
And, by the incantation of this verse,
Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth,
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !
Be through my lips to unawakened earth
The trumpet of a prophecy !

Scarcely thus can meaner mortals venture to speak of themselves. Yet in such a way in their own

measure may all who grow old feel that autumn does not mean an ending of the year : they may bring forth fruit in old age which shall be for the healing of the nations. Not grieving over decay, not thinking as the autumn wind blows that our labours are dissipated and useless, but remembering the glorious part our Master has given us in the Kingdom of God, let us yield our lives into the general harvest, our contribution to the future to which we belong, in that great faith which Shelley expressed in his " Ode to the West Wind " :

O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?

Looking Around.

There is nothing more marvellous in the teaching of Jesus than the reconciliation which He effected between different ways of looking at life—the realist's and the idealist's way : the individualist's and the collectivist's way.

He showed that there is no real conflict between a reasonable idealism and what is realistic. There are people who think of an idealist as only a visionary out of contact with life and dwelling in a world of dreams : a man who is so much occupied with the thought of the many-mansioned home in Heaven that he forgets the thousands of his fellow-creatures who are huddled under nameless conditions in the one-roomed houses of the poor. Jesus was not an idealist of that sort ; and He cherished no illusions about human nature. When He described human nature in His parables He spoke of a piece of money lost among the rubbish of a house, of a sheep wandering

among the hills in the darkness, of a son who had become a prodigal. He knew how wealth lulled men into selfish forgetfulness, and how poverty drove men into horrid crimes, so that a man could be shockingly ungrateful in order to wring three hundred pence out of a debtor, and for the sake of thirty pieces of silver a traitor could betray His cause.

Knowing all the hard and grimy facts of life, Jesus set Himself to alleviate them so far as might be. He, the supreme Teacher, the Thinker, the Dreamer, was content to go about doing good among poor people, just as a village doctor goes about. If we seek for the meaning of His miracles of healing, there is no better explanation of them than this :—He worked those miracles of healing in order to teach that we must not omit the effort to make life a little more tolerable for those whom we can immediately benefit, all the time that we are cherishing visions of a world from which sorrow and sin have gone. The way to reach an ideal is not to dream over it, but to do the little that is in our power to help it on.

Our Lord raised a ladder, like Jacob's, whose top reached the Heaven, yet its base, like Jacob's, was firmly set on the facts of life. In short, in order to be a realist, He taught that a man must be an idealist too. The men with the muck-rake who peer about among the garbage, and fancy that they are seeing life, are not in truth realists. There are flowers as well as offal on the face of the earth, if they took the trouble to discover them ; and there are stars clear shining in the sky as well as mud for our feet to splash in. " Man liveth not by bread alone " is the testimony of One who saw life whole. Over all the meannesses and the petty passions of men the

true thinker and teacher sees the sky of Heaven over-arching, and he believes that out of the age-long struggle the Kingdom of God will emerge.

Thus Jesus takes His place at the head of all those who have cherished visions of a better world—a realist because He knows things as they are: an idealist because He believes in the

> far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves.

Life is only rightly understood when the real is suffused in the glory of the ideal, and all that makes us dissatisfied and sorrowful in the present is informed with some knowledge of the Plan—some glimpse of understanding into that Purpose of God which is working out through all.

It is marvellous also to discover how Jesus reconciled the attitude to life which is taken respectively by the individualist and the collectivist. We, shallower thinkers, find it necessary to take one or the other point of view. But the Great Master showed that truth is in the reconciliation of the two. Jesus begins with personality; but He adds, "You find your personality by losing it." He tells a man of the infinite worth of his own soul—"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world but lose his individuality?" But then, just when one might have fancied that one's first duty is to turn to the task of a personal salvation, He says, Whosoever will save his individuality will lose it; and whosoever is willing to lose his individuality will assuredly find it in the Kingdom of God.

The individual is the unit with whom the Saviour deals. Nothing is more remarkable in the Gospels

than the way in which Jesus seemed to shun crowds and to prefer to spend the treasures of his wisdom on a few disciples in an upper room, or a solitary Pharisee at nightfall, or a bewildered and scarcely comprehending woman at a well. It could not be without this significance—that if the kingdom of God is to come in this world it will be through the mediation of convinced and holy believers. Not the aggregate but the individual soul is the Saviour's first concern.

Here is the error of many teachers and dreamers of our time. They are talking so much of reforming society that they forget the need of reforming themselves; and amid all the anxious problems concerning the housing of the poor and the improvement of the conditions of life, they cease to lay stress on the old fact of sin which is at the root of much of life's misery. Could the drinking habits of our community be changed—that is, if this and that individual would overcome a besetting sin—a renovation would be wrought on the face of society greater than any political revolution could cause. We are in danger of forgetting that. But it is at the foundation of sound teaching. "You will never make the golden age," said Mr. Herbert Spencer, "out of leaden men." When they tell us of possible reconstructions of society, and a better division of wealth than under the present industrial system is possible, we can only answer that a better era might possibly be thus inaugurated; but it would not be with the existing men. The root of all prayer for the coming of the Kingdom of God is in a right understanding of that saying of the Master, "The Kingdom of God is within you."

Yet Jesus makes a reconciliation with the collectivist.

He tells us that salvation is essentially social, and men come to the realisation of themselves not as individuals but as members of a social order. The day was when these were phrases of philosophy. When people spoke of the "solidarity of the race" they employed a term which was only understood by those who had studied Auguste Comte and the teachers of his school. But the word and the thought of solidarity have come down to the masses of mankind. Nothing is nearer to modern interest, and not least among the manual workers, than the idea of a social system in which we are all inextricably bound. It is strange indeed that the Church of Christ has been slow to adapt herself to the thought. For in her sacred books there is the record of Moses, who identified his own life so deeply with the life of his nation that he prayed that the punishment of a people might be on him; and of St. Paul, who was willing to be an outcast from the mercy of God if his race might be saved; and woven through the very texture of our religion is the story of One who died that in Him all might be made alive. But, strange as it may be, it is the fact that the Church has presented her Gospel overmuch as an individual salvation, and the task of saving our own souls has been exalted above the Lord's vision of a Kingdom of God.

Thus for a while the Church has lost some earnest souls, especially among the workers with their hands, who identify her too much with questions of ecclesiasticism and quibbles about insoluble problems, and see her too little as the greatest agent in the world for advancing God's Kingdom among men. The Church needs a great revival of what has been called the "social conscience"—that moral sense whose reference

is not to individual conduct merely but to the general good of men.

It is impossible to live in any city without learning the need for such a social conscience. There are manifest tokens on every hand that people are slovenly and selfish, and have been thinking of their own immediate gratification with no adequate sense of the discomfort or the danger of their fellows. In the most obvious of duties—that of doing one's best to avoid the spreading of infectious diseases like consumption—such a conscience would make a welcome change. The question of the feeding of poor children, and the training of their physique, would present itself to such a social conscience with an instant appeal. The reproach would lie heavily on any man of leisure and ability who had developed such a conscience if he were taking no part in charitable work or in the public administration. The future of children unborn would then have a meaning for reckless parents that hardly now suggests itself. And any one can see how such a conscience towards the community would react upon the individual character, and a man would realise himself as generous, magnanimous, refined, as never he would have become had his interest been self-centred, and his care been only for his pleasure and his ease. Whosoever will lose his individuality thus will find it unto life eternal. Thus does the Lord reconcile two views of life apparently opposed. The only wise selfishness is seen to be that from which the thought of self is banished, and the cravings for personal expression are merged—merged and satisfied—in the wider aim of the Kingdom of God.

A familiar figure has been many a time used to illustrate the imperfection of our reading of history.

We stand at one side of a loom while a great carpet is being woven : we see nothing but a tangle of threads and loose ends : the ignorant and unbelieving might fancy that some irresponsible engine was making a jest with a mass of heterogeneous wool. But could we stand at the other side of the loom, we should see the pattern working out, orderly and beautiful and all as the design for it had been. So the history of our race may be to the eyes of those within the veil : so it may be to us on a better shore on some future day : so certainly to the all-discerning Eye it is now. He sees the tangled web of human destiny working out into that Plan set for it from all eternity, for whose fulfilment the Master bade us pray and say, " Thy Kingdom come."

Looking Forward

Duty to the Future.—It is probably harder to realise our relation to the future than it is to accept the truth about the past. A hundred signs, bodily, mental, spiritual, assure us that we are the heirs of the ages, that generations before us have made us what we are. Our diseases are inherited, and it is not difficult to believe that the whole texture of our mind has been woven for us by the experience of those who have gone before. Thus our indebtedness to the past has become a commonplace of thoughtfulness. Few are utterly oblivious of it.

It needs somewhat more of imaginative effort to realise that the present is an eternal mother as well as an eternal daughter—that generations unborn will be influenced by our conduct now. When we see an oak, it is not an incredible thing to us to be told that

it sprang from an acorn. But when an acorn falls into the soil, it wants a strain of fancy to see in it the future oak. Such a defect of imagination has perhaps more to do than selfishness with the common failure to discern our duty to posterity.

It is the part of all good men to rescue themselves from this dullness of vision, and to contemplate their life as not ended with themselves, as that man believed who asked that they should bury his influence in his grave. To a quickened intelligence the links grow visible that bind the generations together.

There are, however, certain great human instincts which war against the selfishness which thinks only of the present and is content if things will last our time.

In most men there is at least the desire to be remembered, and in most the desire to be favourably remembered. The present lecturer saw recently in Cairo the contents of the tomb of Tutankhamen. He could not resist the impression that they leave of a man's dread of being forgotten. Vague and pagan the desire may be, but it helps to restore the dignity of life. Almost any attitude to time is better than that which is obsessed by its boundary, and says, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

The instinct of parentage is the most helpful human emotion in carrying service beyond the hour we live in and the places we see. A woman writer gave utterance to the cynical opinion: "There is something pathetically absurd in this sacrifice to their children of generation after generation of grown people." "Absurd!" It is the most beautiful thing in mankind, its nearest reach to the heart of God. The nation that loses it approaches the frame of mind which says—What does it matter about posterity?

things will last our time. It was probably inevitable that education should be made free in Scotland. Probably, also, there are other public boons that lighten the responsibility of parents towards their children which can be advocated on grounds of public policy. But those who know what the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of children has done for the making of our Scottish people are suspicious of anything that discourages it. Who has not known some peasant father and mother who have pinched and toiled and saved for years that their lad should have a college education, and a chance in life that never came to themselves? If we read in monthly magazines of the "pathetic absurdity of the sacrifice," we only want to think of such fathers and mothers counting it the joy of their life to have laboured not for themselves—to have a good time ere they die—but for a career that is to be useful and honourable long after they lie in the country churchyard, oblivious of it all. In greater or less degree, but to some extent always, the unselfish passion of parentage helps to carry imagination and service beyond the present, and to save the soul from that degradation which is content if things only last our time.

Deep planted in our mystic frame there is also a social instinct that makes posterity not indifferent to us. Goethe, in his mighty egotism, once wrote: "The man who has life in him feels himself to be here for his own sake, not for the public." That always seems to be true of Goethe which was said of another: "His soul was like a star and dwelt apart." Yet there seems to be manifest proof that humanity at its best has not realised itself as Goethe did, as being here for its own sake. One does not think of

the saints and martyrs only, but of the great, dim, innominate multitude which seems ever to have felt an overpowering sense of indebtedness, and to have scorned a time-limit of its obligation, and to have laboured and planned and builded not for itself but for generations yet to be. There are a hundred logical arguments against the contentions of Mr. Kidd in his well-known book, *Social Evolution*; but its main doctrine stands true—that the hope of progress is in the subordination of the interests of the present to the interests of the future. The nations in which the social instincts are the deepest and the firmest are those with whom the conquest of the world lies.

Such instincts, "naturally Christian," have been planted in humanity to overcome its baser inclination to narrow interest within the mortal years. They are immensely reinforced by the example and teaching of Jesus Christ. Perhaps there is no more characteristic saying of the Master than that which St. John's seventeenth chapter records: "For their sakes I sanctify myself." If any want the message of Christ's life succinctly told it is in two words 'for others.' Could any blasphemy be more horrible than to put on Christ's lips the words, "I am well content if things last my time"? Was there ever unbelieving critic of the life of Jesus who would have ventured to represent Him as thinking or speaking so? To paint the crucifixion of our Saviour has been the loftiest task to which religious art has turned: some degree of failure marks the noblest and most triumphant effort: but the measure of success may almost be indicated by this test—How far has the painter succeeded in showing that it was not a bare incident

of ancient history that he was depicting, for there is a look on the Sufferer's face which seems to pierce the veil of futurity, and intimate for millions that are to be that for them also a Saviour died ?

Just as we get near the mind of Jesus such a sensitive apprehension of the meaning and the duty of influence will grow and fasten on our minds. An Italian peasant once met the great St. Francis of Assisi. " Art thou," he asked, " Brother Francis ? " " Yes," was the answer. " Then," said the peasant, " try to be as good as all think thee to be : because many have great faith in thee : and therefore I admonish thee to be nothing less than people hope of thee." Some such tender warning is spoken to every Christian man as he learns from his Master the relation he bears to the generations that are to come.

Large and vague words like " altruism " are not pleasing : they veil under loose conceptions the insistent practical duties of life. The duty to posterity begins at the nearest—in our homes. If fathers and mothers have heard the call of Jesus, and have known what He meant by saying " For their sakes I sanctify myself," the relationships of home will take on for them a new solemnity ; they will see, not in merry children's faces only, but in those same faces, grown lined and grey in coming years, the example, the teaching, the tone which are around them now.

As we look beyond our homes to our country, and then beyond that still to the great community of mankind to which we are bound by so many inextricable ties, is it with some such enthusiasm for the victory of the right side that we contemplate our death ? Can we say " I die happy " if we see that life is to be made sweeter, in worthier and more dignified

conditions, for my fellow-countrymen, for my fellow-creatures in the coming days? Does the dream of progress enthral us, and the hopes of humanity hold our heart? Then somehow, in our degree, we are understanding what Jesus meant by His great life-message, 'for others.'

Thus, the essence of the Gospel is its missionary motive: its great message is the missionary appeal. There is no use in picturing the darkness and oppression of many heathen lands, the hopelessness of many heathen creeds: the secret of missionary purpose is nearer and more vital. If we know Christ at all, we know that we cannot save our souls alone: we can only save our souls by service. The question is, not what the world can give us, but what we can do for the world. And as of old, when men say "Who is my neighbour?", hesitating to do anything because there is no definite instruction where to begin, the answer is in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Its crucial teaching is that all need our help to whom our help can be given—the poor at home and the fallen, and the ignorant and the sick; and abroad, the poor, the fallen, the ignorant, the sick—and not these only who are alive to-day, but the myriads to be born, and the great human family that cries to us out of the mist of the future, telling us that their fate depends on our worthiness to-day. If the world is to be made a Christian world for them to be born into, it will be because we are awake to our duty to posterity now. It is easy to shut the ears of our imagination to that call. Who can have less claim on us, people might ask, than those who are not yet born? "After me the deluge," said Louis the XVth of France. "When I am dead, let the world be

mixed with fire," said the Emperor Nero. "Is it not good if peace and truth be in my days?" said King Hezekiah. It is easy to be as careless about the future as they. But Jesus looked down the long vista of the years, and heard the unborn children of Asia and Africa and Europe calling to Him; and as He prepared Himself for His sacrifice He thought of them and what He might do for them, and He said "For their sakes I sanctify myself."

Our life is described in one of the best known Psalms as "a tale that is told"—what might be reckoned of less moment in the world than that? Before its telling there was a little curiosity; while the telling went on there was a little amusement; when it was done there was a little applause. That was all; and that, said the Psalmist, is life.

More bitter words than his come to mind. In his last hours, when Macbeth heard of the death of his Queen, he moralised on the worth of being:

> Life's but a walking shadow: a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more. It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.

The Psalmist would have hated the bitter words of Macbeth. "A tale that is told" is one thing, and sad enough; but there is a whole world of difference between it and "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." For consider what the figure implies.

It speaks of the romance of life; and there is nothing sad in that. A tale may end tragically or it may end happily; but at least it has the charm of old

romance at its heart. Of most of the world's great stories this might be said to be the brief epitome : "There was a man, a woman, and an obstacle." In older days the obstacle was invariably overcome ; and the tale closed amid the peal of marriage bells. A more pessimistic age watches the sun set amid gloom and blighted hopes. That great writer Thomas Hardy closes his narrative of a broken woman's life with the epigram, "The President of the Immortals had ended his sport with Tess." But let life be a tale of sorrow or of joy, at least it is big with meaning. The novelists reach a varied standard of attainment ; but all of them have something to suggest of the charm of life—the colour and joy of being. The cruellest of them, whose aim is only to picture the blistered conscience and the maimed purpose, do not fail of making the world a place of adventure and enterprise and the surge of passion and the wide gamut of emotional experience. That is why of a hundred books taken out of a library eighty are works of fiction. People want to see their life reflected in the books they read ; and they know that the best mirror of life, as the Psalmist said, is a tale. The strange passions which lurk under uneventful incidents make the novels of Jane Austen a photographic illustration of ordinary life. Dreams of chivalry haunt prosaic people, and make commonplace men and women have visions of war and tournaments and the courts of kings ; and they find Sir Walter Scott or old Dumas the interpreters of the impossible to their longing hearts. George Meredith and the rest of the psychologists awake the unreflective to the real motives of their actions. Even the romance of crime and its detection has something to bestow upon grey lives of the lust of

strife, the terror of force and cleverness, the hot taste of being. When the Psalmist spoke of our life as "a tale that is told," at the very least he suggested something of the significance of life and its romance. At the very least he spoke of days that are not dull, but are crowded with all the material out of which comedy and tragedy and melodrama are framed.

The very fact that the tale is told adds a new poignancy to the figure. For the dullest are made dignified by death. The end crowns the work. And out of the climax of the story—be it a short story or one that needs seventy years to work out its plot—the unity of life is found. Just as one is tempted to turn to the end of a novel to anticipate its excitements, so do we marvel over the issue of human lives. And, just as a settled and satisfied judgement occupies our mind when the last page of the story is read, so a verdict often different from that which would have been pronounced earlier is reached when the tale of life is told, and over a finished career we discern the guiding principle of the whole. Take it how we will, there is something not unworthy in the estimate of life in terms of literature—the description of the Psalmist that it is "as a tale that is told."

Consider how the figure starts at once the suggestion that story-telling may rise—as in the world's history it has risen—to the noblest heights of genius. If a tale can be (as most truly it can be) a magnificent work of art, then a life also can be made illustrious and beautiful and an inspiration to all who see it. Of course, one knows that all stories are not told as by a master. There are some who have the gift of imagination, but little restraint of taste and little aptitude for the use of that marvellous instrument of thought, the

English tongue. There are people who can devise situations, but are too illiterate to give them charm. But when imagination has a deft hand, and the student of human nature is an artist also in language and in the shades of feeling, then the tale-teller can be a minister of instruction and refined pleasure above any man of genius, other perhaps than a great poet.

It is such a figure we are encouraged to transfer to life. Not only does the fact that our years are like a tale suggest the varied interest and romance of human lives ; it makes us think also how they may be like a great work of imagination—they may be a masterpiece of the art of living. They may be rounded, unified, complete ; they may be satisfying to the critic's eye, warming to the heart of the simple lover of life ; they may stir all those emotions of tenderness and pride and joy and passionate ambition which the greatest works of art arouse.

A curious sense of finality is the first implication of the phrase "a tale that is told." All seems to be over and done with. The last echo of the story dies away. "Finis" is read on the closing page ; and the book is shut and done. But is that really a true impression of the effect of the great tales of the world's literature ? When the tale was told was its impression gone ? A useful and interesting study might be made of the effects that have been produced by some famous novels. There spring to one's mind a few conspicuous illustrations. *Nicholas Nickleby* sealed the doom of the wretched old private schools in England. *Le Juif Errant* resulted in the expulsion of the Jesuits from France. *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* built a People's Palace in the East End of London and led to measures for ameliorating

and brightening the lot of the poor in many other cities of Great Britain. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did more than anything else to free the slaves of America. *Hard Cash* produced a wholesome public opinion regarding the subject of asylums for the insane. It would be easy for any one with a knowledge of fiction to expand such a list with illustrations still more pertinent and convincing.

If, then, in such obvious ways a story has been influential, it is apparent that the last word is not pronounced about it when it is said that " the tale is told." It goes on retelling itself, reproducing itself, re-creating in far-off minds the ideals and duties by which originally it was inspired.

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I know not where,
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I know not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterwards, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

That is a true description of the permanent influence of literature—of truth embodied in a tale. The words go silent; but the deep mark on the mind remains.

When the Psalmist spoke of life as " a tale that is told," we take up the quaint and bold analogy. Then also life is not done when it seems to be done.

Its power abides. The high, purposeful noble lives are like great works of literature—living epistles known and read of all men—quickening generations to come to nobler impulses. Even the less illustrious are remembered and leave their mark. In a world where the "Conservation of Energy" is a law, the tale that is told finds at least one immortality in "minds made better by its presence." Probably few people realise their duty to the future so deeply as they own their obligation to the past. A hundred signs tell them that they bear out of remote years the destiny which others prepared for them. But the gravity of the meaning of their own life for the babes unborn, for the people of Scotland that are to be, hardly impresses them so profoundly. Yet if there be one lesson more urgent than another, it is suggested by the influence which a good or a bad story has upon the years to come. Let a foul tale be given currency; worse still, let a man of genius like Byron devote his genius to the circulation of such an evil and suggestive tale; the fruits of corruption which grow for centuries are lush and ripe and plentiful. Let a pure and high imagination like that of Scott enrich our literature, and the tales that he told will make winter fires the brighter for ages of the future, will quicken the pulse of chivalry in the men and women of years to come of which we can only dream. So let an evil life be lived and ended as it seems to end; its miasma spreads over illimitable fields. Let a fair, pure, manly life find its close; when the tale is told:

> Sweeter shall the roses blow
> In those far years, those happier years,
> And children weep when we lie low
> Far fewer tears, far softer tears.

Just to the extent in which a man is spiritually educated does the appeal of the generations coming reach his heart and make him pray, "When my time is done, and the book is closed, and the tale is told, may the children who come after me and their children's children be the better for their reading of a pure and a tender page."

VIII

HOPE FOR TIME AND ETERNITY

Hope.—It is sometimes denied that Hopefulness is a virtue, and it has been described as a mere matter of temperament. The older psychologists were accustomed to distinguish four temperaments—the sanguine, the melancholic, the choleric, and the phlegmatic. Of these the sanguine temperament was the constitutional basis of Hope. A more rational basis, however, must be claimed for the virtue even when it is admitted that some men find it more easy to cultivate Hope than others find it. It has its root in faith in God's goodness and man's goodness, and in the ultimate triumph of just causes. That faith is justified not only by the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, but by educated experience.

There are no texts that can be quoted in which our Lord enjoined the virtue of Hope. It was not apparently a word that was often on His lips. The nearest approach to an injunction of Hope was His repeated warning against over-anxiety, and His rebuke of worry. But His whole frame of mind was so instinct with Hopefulness that it may fairly be maintained that the virtue rests upon Him and His teaching more than upon any other stay. In two ways especially Christ vindicated the attitude of Hopefulness.

His view of human nature was consistently hopeful,

Not even the worst cases of depravity left Him in despair. Behind the haggard countenance of the felon and the wasted cheek of the street-woman Christ always discovered the unobliterated traces of Eden, the unfulfilled expectations of Paradise. To those upon whom Habit seemed to have laid an irresistible hold He said "Go and sin no more"; and His hope for them rekindled hope in themselves. To be believed in, to have great things expected of us, is one of the keenest spurs to effort; and this stimulus was constantly used by Christ. He was indeed under no illusions. He knew the Disciples as they were—slow, vacillating, easily discouraged; but He leant all the future of His Church upon them; and He was not disappointed. There could not have been a more conspicuous triumph of Hope.

In a second respect Christ's example of Hopefulness is striking and memorable. There is not a word recorded which hints that He ever despaired of His cause. The students of His life have disputed about the question whether He rested His hope consistently on one method of achieving success or on one ideal of success: but they have not ventured to say that it entered into His calculation that He might fail. Not a downhearted word escaped Him up to the end; and even when in most manifest ways He seemed powerless in the grip of enemies and the most pitiable of victims, He Himself marched as to an assured triumph—not indeed with martial tread, but with a self-mastery and a tender and compassionate frame towards those who ill-treated Him, which the more we think of it impresses itself on us the more.

The teaching of Jesus regarding the Future may most profitably be discussed under three heads:

1. His promises regarding the Kingdom of God;
2. The implications of His title "Son of Man"; and
3. His direct teaching regarding the future life of the redeemed and the judgement on the unworthy.

These subjects, however, lie so directly in the line of Biblical Theology that they are only suggested and not worked out now.

It would be easy to select from the writings of the Apostles a multitude of texts in which either the word Hope is used, or expression is given in other terms to such a frame. Such phrases are most common in St. Peter, who on account of them has been called the "Apostle of Hope"; but these can be paralleled from every book of the New Testament. It has been rightly said that the New Testament is the most buoyant and exhilarating book in literature. It opens with the promise of a Redeemer: it closes with the promise of the consummation of His redemptive work when He comes again.

The Old Testament retains its hold upon the Christian mind mainly on account of its attitude of Hope. Prophecy had other elements in it, more characteristic than prediction; but that element was assuredly in it as in all declaration of an ideal. The prophets were men of foresight as well as of insight. They lived upon the shall-be, and fed upon the future. After every possible explanation has been given of the direct reference of many prophetic oracles, there still remains the general sense that the Golden Age was being set in a day to come, and not in a day that was past. It may not be possible in all cases to justify the application to Jesus Christ of every oracle that has been called Messianic; but it is no illusion that finds their trend and general suggestiveness summed up in

Him. Christ is the vindication of the Hope of Israel as He is Himself the ground of the Hope of the World.

The whole subject of our Lord's relation to Apocalyptic has received an unusual degree of attention from modern scholars. Discussion has been specially concentrated upon the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, sometimes called "the little Apocalypse," but the apocalyptic colour of many other sayings of the Master has been recognised.

The tendency in recent years has been to exaggerate the apocalyptic element in our Lord's teaching. Sufficient allowance has not been made for the incapacity of those who reported His words to recognise their spirituality, and also for the unconscious inclination of the records to introduce their own conceptions of the future into the Lord's discourses. On the other hand, the Gospels are now recognised to be fundamentally trustworthy, and it is impossible entirely to eliminate the eschatological element from the teaching of Jesus.

Upon that element in His teaching it has to be remarked that His use of eschatological symbolism was such as to tend to make the symbolism disappear into ethical and present-day reference. His use of it was a great contribution to positive hopefulness. On the whole, He discouraged mere curiosity about the future, though He always promoted a forward outlook. Eschatology was to Him a means to an end—that end being the moral and spiritual transformation which we call communion with God.

The Future.—Almost every modern book, even among those which represent the most dogmatic schools, takes a reticent and restrained attitude to the mysteries

of the future, very different from that in which an older theology delighted. Hardly anything in literature is more outrageous than the liberty which Jonathan Edwards and the theologians of New England allowed themselves in their description of the condition of the lost. And a book which once used to be found in almost every cottage in Scotland, Boston's *Fourfold State*, vies with the New England theologians in its lurid visions of an unsaved world. Good and kind and godly men seemed to be seized with the spirit of the Grand Inquisitor when they told of the sufferings of unhappy sinful men.

In the theology of Anglicanism, Pearson's *Exposition of the Creed* has been as influential as any book. The ghastly and passionless lucidity of statement with which, in his chapter on the "Life Everlasting," Pearson states the case of the lost almost takes our breath away.

Rome can show a literature of horror upon this subject which neither Geneva or Canterbury can match. Perhaps the most celebrated sermon of the most celebrated preacher of France, the great Massillon, was on the subject of "The Fewness of the Elect." "The way of death," he cried, "is the way of the many; the saints are always singular." Then follows a passage of almost unexampled eloquence. Jesus comes to Judgement. The great congregation which the preacher addressed must be divided into two parts according to their character. The throne is set. Rank, beauty, power, fame are swept away. Four classes are left—the sinners who will not be converted; those who, having been converted, fall away; the sinners who put conversion off; those who think they are converted and are not. Then, with streaming eyes and broken voice, the great orator asked, "Lord, how many here to-day

will be saved ? " Old people are familiar with such a strain of preaching, the echo of a past age. But if one takes almost any modern book of Divinity one finds in it a note more subdued, a suggestion of difficulty and mystery in the matter, which our ancestors, with their forensic attitude to life, and their metallic legalism, hardly seemed to realise.

If any one makes this comparison between the treatment of the doctrine of the last things in the days of our forefathers and in modern times, he will not fail to come to this conclusion—that we are much less confident in our definitions than men once thought they had a right to be.

A second conclusion will also be formed in our minds, namely, that ours is the only age in which a real Eschatology, or doctrine of the last things, could be formed. It is the latest doctrine in logical order of all the Christian truths. It comes at the end of all theological treatises, as at the end of the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed and of the great Protestant Confessions of Faith. The historical order of the development of Christian doctrine has been the same as the logical order. Christian Theology begins in the second century with the work of apologetics and the vindication of all religion against paganism. Then, just as in the text-books, the minds of men passed to the study of the great doctrines concerning God—the Trinity and so forth. These doctrines being settled, the Church turned, under the leadership of St. Augustine, to what is called Anthropology, the doctrine of man's nature and the relation to it of sin and grace. In due order there came next the questions about the divine and human natures of our Lord—what is called Christology. That led almost of necessity to the question which St.

Anselm and the men of his time discussed, Cur Deus homo? Why was God made man? What is the Atonement? This is the doctrine technically known as Soteriology. Then the Reformers found the Christian faith waiting for another question, 'How does Christ's sacrifice benefit man? How does the Spirit apply to us the blessings Christ has purchased?' Justification, Adoption, Sanctification became the watchwords of the Reformation time. The circle of Christian doctrine is thus completed—all but one remaining theme, the things that shall be hereafter.

From the earliest days there had been theories and dreams and doctrines concerning the last things; and the mediævalists were even more dogmatic on the matter than we can be; but it has come to those upon whom the ends of the world have fallen to construct a real Eschatology or doctrine of the Hereafter, free from childish imaginations, and informed with that knowledge of the roots of character which only a later time could bring.

Any true doctrine concerning the future of souls must take account of considerations which only in comparatively recent years have met with an adequate recognition. They are such as these:—It becomes increasingly evident that a judgement upon character can only be made after fair allowance both for the surroundings in which it is developed and for the start in life with which it was handicapped. Heredity and environment introduce problems which a judge of the Old Bailey type cannot recognise; for human justice is a clumsy instrument; but which must enormously affect any really valuable estimate of character. Then, again, we begin to realise that a third part of the human race die in infancy. This life has neither been

an education nor a probation for them. They have had no time either to be tried or trained. Any doctrine of the future that is worth holding must find some room for their development in character. A parent once spoke of his possible meeting with his daughter in Heaven. She had died in early infancy, and he pictured the change which the years must have made—if there be years in Heaven—and he fancied himself saying to her, "O my beloved child, dead so many years ago, can this indeed be you?" Imagination is baffled by such thoughts. But that any worthy doctrine of the Hereafter must make place for them, and for all that they imply of a discipline and growth beyond the veil, we can have no doubt at all.

The whole question of the Heathen presents a similar problem to modern minds. The world is now so connected and organised that the problem weighs on us with an insistence that our forefathers hardly felt. It is not enough to cast the great majority of the human race upon the "uncovenanted mercies of God." Our sons and daughters meet heathen people every day, in Africa, in China, in India; let our race prejudice be what it will, we know that these people are human souls, each bearing his own destiny as we. The whole question is bewildering in its hugeness and complexity for us. It staggers faith. But no doctrine of a future world will ever gain hold on the best hearts which has not a place in it for the redemption of the heathen, and their learning of the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord—our Lord and theirs.

Such considerations as these must enter into any doctrine of the Hereafter that is to appeal to the instincts which Christ Himself has trained in us. Holding them as the essential conditions of any complete view

of the subject, we are prepared to seek for the guidance of Scripture on the whole question of the last things. We must not, however, look for such guidance in that part of revelation which we call "prophecy" in the sense of prediction. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself seems to have been intentionally vague and indefinite in His forecasts of the time to be. And the language of His followers must be read with caution; so much of it is pictorial and symbolical and apocalyptic —the work of impressionist painters and not the matter-of-fact descriptions of a guide-book. Some people deal with sacred literature in a way that shows that they do not even guess what literature means. They read a book like Revelation as unintelligently as the man who, after finishing *Paradise Lost*, asked what it proved. We shall not even approach a right notion of the world to come unless we recognise that all the language about Gehenna and burning pits and gnawing worms and golden streets and ivory gates in which the Revelation delights is the language of impassioned poetry, in what connection with bald realities we cannot know. If we are to deal in symbols at all the picture of the Father's House is better than the dizzy grandeurs of the streets of gold. Even that Father's House is too big for most people —though one knows that the Great God must have things great. But the sooner we realise that there is practically nothing told us about the things which shall be hereafter except in imaginative and pictorial way, the sooner we shall be delivered from the least profitable, if perhaps the most seductive, of all speculations — that which seeks for definite ideas regarding the life of Spirits beyond. Long ago people were excited over an American book called *The Gates*

Ajar, which attempted a description of Heaven. Many know the very attractive pictures of the world beyond which Mrs. Oliphant wrote in *The Little Pilgrim through the Unseen*. Even a great preacher like Canon Liddon attempted the same task in a sermon on "The First Five Minutes after Death." But one cannot read any such efforts without the strongest conviction that they are away from the spirit of the New Testament—from that reticence concerning all the matter which the Wisest Teacher in His wisdom deemed to be best for us.

Our guide to a doctrine of the Hereafter is not in definite predictions, but in the Scriptural view of man's nature and of God's nature—in a right understanding of what the Bible has taught concerning Man and God.

First: Let us master the Bible doctrine of Man, and the conviction grows upon us that much of current thinking about the future belittles man's dignity and robs him of what is noblest and most characteristic, namely, his free activity and the maintenance of will or choice. We have always been taught that he is not a being meant only to enjoy or only to suffer; the life of mere sensation is the lowest level on which a man can live. He is a free volitional responsible being made in the image of God. If we take away freedom and rob him of the power of doing good or evil any longer, and of the moral strain that makes existence more than a torpid consciousness, we are claiming for him an immortality indeed, but it is at the cost of all that makes immortality venerable and to be desired. Thus it must be held that growth and change are of the essence of a right view of the Life Beyond. The good will get better: in the long years approximating slowly to the Ideal which has always gleamed before

them from afar. And the unawakened souls—to whom life was but a dream—will be stirred into thought, realisation, purposefulness; and the chances they never had below will then be fully within their power. And, though it seems hard in some ways to think it, if man be still man, it is honourable to his nature to believe that the bad may become worse and ever worse, the shadows lasting beside the light. "Universalists" and preachers of what is called the "larger hope" can be as dogmatic as any New England Puritan concerning what they do not know. But, unless will is to be destroyed and personality to cease, it is hard to discover why compulsory goodness should be found Beyond any more than here. Thus we must put much value on a right view of man, if we are to frame a whole doctrine of the last things.

A right view of God, the view which our Saviour gave, adds all that we need in order to think of the future sanely and yet hopefully and with joy. God is Love and our Father. If retribution hereafter be necessary and inevitable as it is here, then there will be retribution. But God does not therefore cease to be God and our Father. Deism is no more true there than here. You cannot part God from His world and from His children on earth. Neither can you banish Him from the Beyond. And if the Loving Father be there nothing can be utterly amiss even with the least worthy of the souls He made. We must constantly realise the future under the idea which Christ loved, that of a *Kingdom of God*, rather than under the harsh notions of bargaining and forfeiting which our forefathers affected and called the "Covenants" of "Works" and "Grace." There or here, God is God;

not outside of life and aloof from men, but close inwound with all, the light by which we see, the love that warms our hearts, the very life by which we live at all.

I dimly guess from blessings known
Of greater out of sight,
And with the chastised Psalmist own
His judgements too are right.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And so beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, Thou most worthy Judge Eternal, suffer us not at our last hour for any pains of death to fall from Thee.

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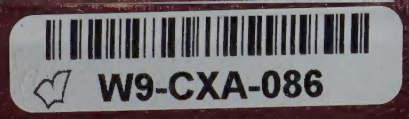
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